

NATIONAL IDENTITY, CITIZENSHIP AND PLURALISM IN TURKEY:
THE TURBAN QUESTION

The Institute of Economics and Social Sciences
of
Bilkent University

by
FUNDA GENÇOĞLU

In Partial Fulfillment Of The Requirements For The Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

In
THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
BILKENT UNIVERSITY
ANKARA

August, 1997

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I certify that I have read this thesis and in my opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Political Science and Public Administration.




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ABSTRACT

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Department of Political Science and Public Administration

August 1997

The contemporary process of globalization involves a tension between cultural heterogenization and cultural homogenization which has made the relationship between the nation-state and its members a problematical issue. It is out of this context that the modern , liberal-democratic notion of citizenship has become focus of attention for the students of political science. The modern, liberal-democratic idea of citizenship is based upon a distinction between public and private which embraces the principle of equality before the law in the public while relegating all particularities and differences to the private. This thesis tries to explain the “turban question” in Turkey by contextualizing it with reference to the points raised by the contemporary critics of modern, liberal-democratic conception of citizenship.

ÖZET

TÜRKİYE’DE KİMLİK, VATANDAŞLIK, VE ÇOĞULCULUK: TÜRBAN SORUNU

Funda Gençoğlu

Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi Bölümü

Ağustos 1997

Bu çalışma Türkiye’deki türban sorununu küreselleşme ve buna bağlı olarak farklı kimliklerin ortaya çıkışı üzerine siyaset bilimi literatüründe süregiden tartışmalar ışığında açıklamaya çalışmaktadır. Tartışmanın ana eksenini modern vatandaşlık anlayışı ve onun eleştirileri oluşturmaktadır. Bu teorik çerçeveye birlikte Türkiye’de vatandaşlık kavramının tarihsel gelişimi de verilerek türban meselesinin arkaplanı açıklanmaya çalışılmaktadır.

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To My Family

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INTRODUCTION

For a decade or so, one of the most topical subjects in the political science literature has been the question of the relationship between the nation-state, identity and difference. The debates revolving around such concepts as 'multiculturalism', 'pluralism', 'identity politics', 'politics of difference', 'politics of recognition', despite differences among them, have at their center a challenge to the foundation of the nation-state. The increasing interest in the relationship between the nation-state, identity, and difference has in turn drew the attentions to the notion of citizenship, because citizenship is the reference point when at stake is the relationship between the modern state and its members.

One tends to ask what has been responsible for all these developments. Bryan Turner points out several factors: Contemporary developments in Eastern Europe, and in the Soviet Union which have raised the complicated relationship between nationalism, political identity, participation, and citizenship; the refugee problem which has created a new crisis of stateless persons in the contemporary political system; the institutional growth of the European Community which have raised important problems about citizenship status, not only for minorities but also for all forms of transient and migrant labor.¹

What all these developments tell us is that "citizenship as an issue has become prominent, because the traditional boundaries of the nation-state in Europe and elsewhere have been profoundly challenged by global developments in the

organization of modern societies. Thus, the first major issue in the revival of citizenship as a concept and as a political platform is the process we may call globalization."² The centrality of the notion of citizenship in a variety of studies has made it clear that citizenship is a problematic concept. As many scholars point out, the process of globalization has been going hand in hand with the tension between *cultural homogenization* and the *cultural heterogenization* which is also known as the tension between universalism and particularism.³

On the issue of cultural homogenization, we come across arguments like Francis Fukuyama's "the end of history thesis" which sees a universalization of liberal democracy, together with the globalization of free market ideology and the dissolution of differences into sameness. Concomitantly, one observes particularistic conflicts, most prominent examples of which are the rise of religious fundamentalism, and of ethnic nationalisms (even "ethnic cleansings"). Apart from such political practices, political theory literature too, has been dominated by the debates over such issues as multiculturalism, the politics of recognition, and the politics of difference.

All these political developments and theoretical debates draw our attention to the tendency towards cultural heterogenization rather than cultural homogenization. As Robertson argues, globalization involves and promotes the

¹Bryan Turner, "Contemporary Problems in the Theory of Citizenship", in B. Turner ed. *Citizenship and Social Theory* (London: Sage Publications, 1993),1.

²*Ibid*, p.1.

³Robertson quoted in Fuat Keyman, "On the Relation Between Global Modernity and Nationalism: The Crisis of Hegemony and the Rise of (Islamic) Identity in Turkey", *New Perspectives on Turkey*, Fall 1995, No.13, 100.

relativization of societal and civilizational identities. "As certain general conceptions of the state-run society and the modern individual have been globally generalized, so those very developments have facilitated ... the search for particularistic identities (both collective and individual)" ⁴

As Keyman rightly points out, to conceive the process of globalization as a tension between the universal and the particular, or between sameness and difference, is not to celebrate the end of history but

to come fully to terms with the fact that the dominant forms of the unitary conception of the modern self (as a political class identity or a citizen identity or a natural identity) can no longer play their unifying function; nor are they capable of dissolving difference into sameness. In other words, claims about globalization become meaningful only when they are embedded in ... the recognition of 'the crisis of identity'...⁵

Most democracies are now a mosaic of different ethnic and cultural groups. Under these circumstances, liberal democratic societies find themselves confronted with "problems that are associated with equality in the context of difference."⁶ Anne Phillips in this context asks very important questions: "How are democracies to deal with divisions by gender or ethnicity or religion or race, and the way these impinge on political equality? What meaning can we give to the political community when so many groups feel themselves outside it? How can democracies deliver on equality while accommodating and indeed welcoming difference?"⁷ One can argue that globalization and the concomitant tension

⁴ Ronald Robertson, "Globalization, Politics, Religion" in *The Changing Face of Religion*, eds. J. Beckford and T. Luckman (London: Sage, 1989), 19.

⁵ Keyman, "Global Modernity and Nationalism", 94.

⁶ Anne Phillips, *Democracy and Difference*, Oxford, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993, 2.

⁷ *Ibid*, 2.

between universalism and particularism, emergence of 'the crisis of identity ', and the discussions about the question of pluralism and politics of difference have made it clear that the meaning of democracy is changing. Today, in the light of a new historical situation, we have to confront new questions.

These questions that contemporary democracies face take us to the questions of justice, equality and freedom. These issues, in turn, should be addressed keeping in mind the crucial question of *pluralism* in culture, religion, morality. The core of the problem of citizenship and pluralism is the cultural fragmentation of modern states. Members of these states have different personal identities, as evidenced by their ethnic affiliations, their religious beliefs, their views of personal morality, their ideas about what is valuable in life, their tastes and so forth. In all these areas there is a little possibility of convergence or agreement. Yet at the same time, the individuals and groups having these different particular identities need to live together politically.

This in turn means that there should be some common ground or reference point from which their claims on the state can be judged. Citizenship is supposed to provide this reference point⁸. However, the modern notion of citizenship falls short of being useful to deal with the new questions, namely 'the problems that are associated with equality in the context of difference.' To put it briefly, the notion of citizenship as we understand the term today is unable to respond to the requirements of the principle of pluralism.

⁸ David Miller, "Citizenship and Pluralism", *Political Studies*, No.43, 1995, 432.

It is at this point that liberal democracy and its critiques become crucial, since what the term 'changing definition of democracy in the light of new questions' implies is a specific challenge to liberal democracy. The reason for this is that liberal democracy has been the dominant strand within democratic tradition. As one scholar points out, positions on democracy has fallen broadly into two schools of thought: there have been those who supported liberal democracy and those who regarded it as an impoverished and inadequate form.⁹ In other words, the strengths or weaknesses of liberal democracy have provided the central axis of debate. More importantly, what the phrase 'citizenship as we understand the term today' implies is the formulation of citizenship in liberal political thought and the central issue that the critics of liberal democracy have been focusing their attention on is the way that that strand in democratic tradition conceptualizes the relationship between citizenship and pluralism.

The main reason why liberal democratic notion of citizenship has been criticized in this manner is the premise of universality that it is grounded on. Universality implies that all individuals are given the same formal/legal rights regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, religion or class which results in an abstract notion of citizen-individual. The rationale behind this formula is that these latter categories are conceptualized/formulated as 'private concerns'. In liberal political thought the public sphere and the private sphere are completely separated from each other. The realm of politics is defined in the public sphere and so is citizenship. Consequently, liberal democratic citizenship has taken the form of a legal status where everybody is equal, and the possessor of the same political

⁹ Phillips, *Democracy and Difference*, 3.

rights. The public sphere, so defined, has to be impersonal and also neutral with regard to gender, religion, race and ethnicity defined as 'private concerns'.

These two points, that is the abstract notion of citizen-individual and the public/private distinction are the two main points that are being raised by a certain category of the students of democracy who are critical of the liberal strand in the democratic tradition. They claim that the principle of universality in the modern category of citizenship has created a homogenous public, because it has relegated all particularity and difference to the private¹⁰. So they call into question the liberal separation of the public and private spheres and urge for a new understanding of the nature of these two spheres. These in turn, bring into the picture the question of pluralism and consequently a new conception of citizenship.

One common concern in different conceptualizations and/or formulations of citizenship is that "from the ancient world to the present day, citizenship has entailed a discussion of, and a struggle over, the meaning and scope of membership of the community in which one lives. Who belongs and what does *belonging* mean in practice?"¹¹ This study will address this question within the context of Turkish polity.

What we have outlined so far is a global trend in which we have been witnessing the 'crisis of identity' with the concomitant tension between the universal and the particular which in turn has led to a debate over the problem of

¹⁰ Chantal Mouffe, "Preface: Democratic Politics Today" in C. Mouffe ed. *Dimensions of Radical Democracy: Pluralism, Citizenship, Community*, (London, New York: Verso, 1992), 7.

¹¹ S.Hall, and D. Held, "Citizens and Citizenship" in S.Hall and M. Jacques, eds. *New Times: The Changing Face of Politics in the 1990s*, (London: Lawrence& Wishart, 1990), 144.

cultural pluralism and citizenship. Turkey is not an exception to this global trend. During the last decades in Turkey, like in other parts of the world, demands coming from people with different identities have begun to occupy a central place in the political agenda. Different groups asserting their unique identities have come to the surface. Some examples are the reemergence of the Kurdish nationalism, and the rise of Islamic identity. As Keyman points out, this political landscape in Turkey exemplifies very clearly the tension between the universal and the particular. What is at stake is the clash between the secular national identity as the bearer of cultural homogenization and the revitalization of the claims of difference through these movements¹². The reemergence of the Kurdish nationalism and the rise of Islamic identity directly challenge the unifying conception of cultural identity which is the premise on which secular republic of Turkey has been grounded. This social formation, that is the revitalization of the claims of difference as a challenge to monolithic conception of national identity in Turkey is what Keyder calls as "the dilemma of cultural identity on the margin of Europe"¹³.

A concrete case in which this dilemma has been epitomized is the 'turban affair', that is the debate over the women's head covering in Turkey. This affair has been on the agenda since the beginning of the 1980s. During the last few years, however, it has become a source of polarization in the political life of Turkey. What triggered this political problem was the demands coming from some

¹² Keyman, "Global Modernity and Nationalism", 94-95.

¹³ Çağlar Keyder, "The Dilemma of Cultural Identity on the Margin of Europe", Review No.16, 1993, 19-33.

university students to attend the classes with their heads covered, in accordance with the Islamic precepts. Later on, a category of the professional women (especially doctors and lawyers) also began to raise their demands to be able to perform their jobs with that particular dressing style. However, these demands were not found acceptable by the authorities on the grounds that they were against the Dress Code. The women who politicized this issue put forward their major demands in the context of identity politics. At the same time, they have been claiming that the ban on turban is a violation of individual rights and freedoms. On the other hand, those against these demands have been claiming that such demands constitute a threat to the basic principle of Kemalist regime which is laicism.

Indeed, the debates over the women's head-dress is part of the process of the political revitalization of Islam in Turkey. Consequently, the way in which the events and discussions around the turban affair was articulated has led to an opposition between seculars and the religiously oriented; or between Kemalists and Islamists. In time, this opposition has become increasingly polarized due to the particular way in which the Turkish national identity, and relatedly, the notion of citizenship, have been defined in Turkey. More specifically, the two intertwined-principles of the Kemalist republic, namely nationalism and laicism play an important role in the conceptualization of citizenship in the Turkish polity, and contribute to the political polarization on the turban question.

The main objective of this study is to try to explain the turban affair in Turkey by contextualizing it with reference to the two interrelated points raised by the contemporary critics of the modern, liberal democratic conception of

citizenship. One is the aforementioned public/private distinction in the liberal thought, and the other is the abstract notion of citizen-individual. It will be argued that these two points can be quite useful as analytical tools in our task of trying to explain the debates over the turbaned women in Turkey.

In the first chapter there will be an examination of the main principles that the modern notion of citizenship is grounded on. An integral element of this analysis is to situate the notion of modern citizenship in the context of critical approaches to liberal democracy.

The second chapter will be an overview of the controversy over the turbaned women (students and professionals) in Turkey. The arguments put forward by different groups, like media, politicians, intelligence, and the degree of polarization between the 'seculars' and the 'religiously oriented' will be analyzed in light of the historical background of the state/ religion relationship.

In the third chapter, we will examine the question of how we can understand the main political dimensions of the turban affair in Turkey by using as analytical tools the two main points raised by the contemporary critics of modern citizenship.

CHAPTER 1

THE MODERN NOTION OF CITIZENSHIP AND ITS CRITIQUE

1) Liberal Democratic Conception of Citizenship

Although the historical roots of the notion of citizenship go back to the ancient times (to the city-states in ancient Athens in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. and of Romans from the third century B.C. to the first A.D.), citizenship, as we understand the term today, is a modern concept. Its evolution went hand in hand with the development of the liberal democratic tradition during the French Revolution. This chapter will outline the major principles that the modern notion of citizenship is grounded on from an historical perspective. In light of this information, we will be able to make an analysis of the critical approaches to this formulation of citizenship.

Liberal-individualist tradition has its origins in the French Revolutionary ideas. Its evolution went hand in hand with the spread of nationalism at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. This period also witnessed the emergence of nation-states. Although different versions of nationalism gave rise to different conceptions of citizenship, modern citizenship was formulated within the liberal framework and therefore, it had the same connotations in those parts of the world where we see the emergence of nation-states and the concomitant dominance of liberal ideas. The reason why the

development of the nation-state went hand in hand with that of liberal democracy is that during the French Revolution and thereafter nationalism developed together with the idea of popular sovereignty- the ideology that challenged the basis of the ancien régime. The roots of nationalism lie in the eighteenth-century liberal idea that human beings possessed sufficient rationality to acknowledge the rights of others and make sensible collective decisions¹⁴.

During the second half of the eighteenth century demands for freedom from religious discrimination, for equality before the law, for freedom from arbitrary arrest, and for the extension of political rights to a wider spectrum of society were voiced¹⁵ and as Jay points out,

those who advocated political rights... necessarily had to weld together popular alliances that cut across existing political and social divisions to counterbalance the power of their rulers. A vital part of this was defining a wider identity into which different social classes, ethnic groups, tribes, and religious congregations could be grouped. This was the nation¹⁶.

This situation has a direct influence on the evolution of the notion of modern citizenship. It meant that there was a need for uniformity, homogeneity among the people; and the modern notion of citizenship was developed to fulfil this need. As Köker puts it:

¹⁴ Richard Jay, "Nationalism" in R.Eccleshall et al. (eds.) *Political Ideologies: An Introduction* (London: Hutchinson, 1986), 187.

¹⁵ David Heater, *Citizenship: The Civic Ideal in World History, Politics and Education*, (London, New York: Longman, 1990), 37-38.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 190.

French Revolution invented the modern national citizenship in a democratic revolution and established a new polity based on the principle of equality before the law. This legalistic egalitarianism was fortified by a new law grounded on the concept of a *nation une et indivisible* and, in turn, required the inculcation of the same values in all men and women.¹⁷

Köker refers to a core idea of the modern idea of citizenship: equality before the law. As the following analysis is going to show, it is a notion which has its roots in liberal political philosophy and which in turn takes us to the core of liberal citizenship.

The principle of equality before the law came with the notion of popular sovereignty during the French Revolution. The main target was social hierarchies which used to be the basis of *honor* in the ancien régime sense in which it is intrinsically linked to inequalities¹⁸. As against this notion of honor, we have the modern notion of ‘dignity’ in the French revolutionary ideas, now used in a universalist and egalitarian sense, where we talk of the inherent "dignity of human beings", or of citizen dignity¹⁹. The underlying premise here is that everyone shares this human dignity as citizens.

The reformers adduced various arguments to justify these demands, but the ‘natural rights’ theory of John Locke remained crucial in the definition of citizenship. The liberal tradition defines citizenship in terms of individual rights which is founded on the premise of the inherent "dignity of human beings". Locke

¹⁷ Levent Köker, "Political Toleration or Politics of Recognition: The Headscarves Affair Revisited", *Political Theory*, Vol.24 No.2, May 1996, 317.

¹⁸ Charles Taylor, *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 27.

¹⁹ Ibid.

held that “reason is the common rule and measure that God has given to mankind” and therefore that all men must be considered created equal and thereby worthy of the same dignity and respect. According to the natural rights theory of John Locke in particular, and the liberal tradition in general, man has natural rights which are prior to government. Man is by nature free, and no men can have authority over another except with his consent. There is the notion that human beings are atomistic, rational agents whose existence and interests are ontologically prior to society and who have intrinsic worth²⁰. If human beings are thought of first and foremost, as individuals, they must be entitled to the same rights and the same respect. As was said before -with regard to the difference between *honor* and *dignity*- modern liberal political theory arose as a response to any rejection of life that is built upon the recognition and enforcement of unequal statuses and powers - in short domination based on differences. Consequently, the claim of equality which is so central in modern liberal political thought is grounded in a rejection of ‘natural’ authority based on difference and on the assertion of the existence of a *fundamental human sameness*, that is possession of the same bundle of natural rights or of reason. Universality in this sense is what liberal democracy is grounded on. All individuals are endowed with equal rights that they enjoy by virtue of being human. This is the essence of the natural rights theory of John Locke. A natural consequence of this is a particular conception of equality at the heart of which lie a rejection of social privileges or advantages which are enjoyed by some but denied to others on the basis of factors like gender, race, religion or

²⁰ Mary Dietz, "Context is All: Feminism and Theories of Citizenship" in C.Mouffe ed. *Dimensions of Radical Democracy: Pluralism, Citizenship, Community*, 64.

social background. Hence the equality to which liberals subscribe is equality before the law. Notwithstanding any social differences of wealth or status, notwithstanding any biological differences of ability or strength, as citizens we should be treated the same. Whatever the differences, they do not matter. They should not be allowed to count.

This legalistic egalitarianism takes the form of what theorists call 'negative freedom' which is a second tenet of the modern notion of citizenship. Liberal political thought asserts that society should ensure the freedom of all its members to realize their capabilities. Liberalism has its particular conception of freedom which helps to distinguish it from other political tendencies. As Arblaster points out, to speak of freedom immediately invites at least three questions, Freedom from what? To do what? And for whom? The liberal definition is normally couched in terms of 'freedom from' rather than 'freedom to': "It usually defines freedom negatively, as a condition in which one is not compelled, not restricted, not interfered with, and not pressurized."²¹ John Stuart Mill's observation is a classic formulation of this principle: "The only freedom which deserves the name, is that of pursuing our own good in our own way, so long as we do not attempt to deprive others of theirs, or impede their efforts to obtain it"²² Similarly, Isaiah Berlin states that

²¹ A. Arblaster, *The Rise and Decline of Western Liberalism*, 1984, 56.

²² Quoted in Dietz, "Context", 64.

I am normally said to be free to the degree to which no man or body of men interferes with my activity. Political liberty in this sense is simply the area within which a man can act unobstructed by others. If I am prevented by others from doing what I could otherwise do, I am to that degree unfree²³

This particular conception of individual freedom, which is defined as the freedom of the individual to choose his own values or ends without interference from others or, simply, absence of obstacles to possible choices and activities, is closely associated with the particular conception of human equality in liberal tradition. It is man's right, Locke tells us, merely because he is a man, to be allowed to make the best of his life according to his own notion of what is good. Government has nothing better to do than to help him achieve his end, not by giving him what he wants, but making it possible for him to get it by his own efforts"²⁴ In that respect, that is having those rights vis-a-vis the state all individuals are equal.

In sum, then, we can say that the notions of the inherent dignity of human beings, of equality before the law, and of negative liberty, are the building blocks of liberal democratic citizenship which is "the conception of the individual as the 'bearer of formal rights' designed to protect him from the interference of others and to guarantee him the same opportunities or 'equal access' as others"²⁵.

An inseparable part of this formula is liberalism's separation of the public and the private spheres. This distinction consists briefly of the principle of the state

²³ Quoted in Arblaster, *Liberalism*, 57.

²⁴ John Plamenatz, *Man and Society* (London: Longman, 1963), 251.

²⁵ Dietz, "Context", 65.

neutrality with reference to certain social spheres and practices which typically include religion, lifestyles, conceptions of the good, and cultural preferences and which are defined as private. State neutrality implies that whereas political authority should leave the citizens free with reference to the many different conceptions of the good within the private realm, they should in the public sphere be neutral, blind, and indifferent to differences in order to treat everyone equally. In this framework citizenship is defined in the public sphere where all individuals bear of the same formal/legal rights: right to vote, right to stand for election and equality of access. In the public sphere, everyone participates as a member of a polity, and as such he or she is just a citizen like everybody else. In the public sphere citizens should disregard their individual and particular memberships and be 'just citizens' on an equal basis. Such differences as gender, race, ethnicity, class or religion which are the constitutive elements of one's identity, are formulated as private concerns against which the public sphere has to remain neutral.

As we said above, liberal democracy has presumed that we can abstract some essential human sameness in people. Universality in this sense is what liberal democracy is grounded on. The goal of the state is indeed to free people from their differences in the public domain and to equalize all members in their political capacity, independently from the particular human beings they are. It would be an error to view this political goal as narrow-mindedness. It has been fundamentally important in modern history, supporting the emancipation process from hierarchical societies to liberal democracy. However, in today's political context, it

fails to recognize the nature of the demands for the public recognition of collective identities.

At its best, universal citizenship is what every oppressed group has appealed to over the last 200 years: 'No, it does not matter that I am a woman, or an African or a Jew..., for what matters is that we are all human beings'. At its worst, however, it suffers from what generations of socialists have pointed out in relation to class: *it denies what are very real (social) differences that will prevent us from being treated the same.*²⁶

So, this universality of the modern citizenship has been both an achievement, a contribution to political equality, and at the same time, it has been the bases of its limitations. Consequently, this principle of universality has been the main focus of attention for the critics of liberal democracy.

2) Critique of Liberal Democratic Citizenship

The critics of liberal democracy claim that it is dangerous to pretend that who or what we are is irrelevant and to ask people to submerge their group differences in an abstract citizenship. This leaves the existing power relations intact which in turn will reproduce existing inequalities in the society. So, the major criticism of liberal democracy focuses on its failure to deliver on the promise of political equality. Liberal democracy tends to regard this as adequately met by the equal rights to vote and to stand for election; and in doing so, it neglects the social and economic conditions that would make this equality ineffective.

²⁶ Anne Phillips, *Engendering Democracy* (Oxford, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), 53-54, emphasis added.

Amy Gutmann for instance asks: "Can citizens with diverse identities be represented as equals if public institutions do not recognize our particular identities but only our more universally shared interests? Apart from ceding each of us the same rights as all other citizens, what does respecting people as equals entail? In what sense should our identities as men or women,... Christian, Jews, Muslims... *publicly* matter?"²⁷.

According to the liberal view of the neutrality of the public sphere our freedom and equality as citizens refer only to our common characteristics, our universal needs regardless of our particular race, religion, ethnicity, or gender. It suggests that the impersonality of public institutions is the price that the citizens should be willing to pay for living in a society that treats us all as equals²⁸.

In a parallel line of thinking with Gutmann, Charles Taylor too, calls into question this liberal notion of the neutrality or impersonality of the public sphere. In his *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition* (1992) he argues that public institutions should not simply refuse to respond to the demand for recognition by citizens²⁹. The demand to be publicly recognized for one's *particularity* is as understandable as it is problematic and controversial.

Then, the crucial question arises: "How can the maximum of pluralism can be defended -in order to respect the rights of the widest possible groups- without destroying the very framework of the political community as constituted by the

²⁷ Amy Gutmann, "Introduction" in C. Taylor, *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 4.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Taylor, *Multiculturalism*, 20.

institutions and practices that constitute modern democracy and define our identity as citizens?"³⁰.

Liberal democratic citizenship runs into difficulties when it is faced with the challenge of pluralism. This clash between citizenship and pluralism is very difficult to solve and it is the main focus of the critics of the liberal notion of citizenship in their effort to understand and explain the main dimensions of this problem. They try to do this by drawing the attention to two important points that lie at the heart of the liberal democratic conception of citizenship: the public/private distinction and the consequent abstract notion of citizen-individual.

The core of the problem of citizenship and pluralism is the cultural fragmentation of modern states. Members of these states have different identities; their ethnic affiliations, their religious beliefs, their views of 'good life' are different. Yet at the same time, these individuals and groups with different particular identities have to live together. As noted, liberal democratic tradition deals with this issue through a separation of the public and the private spheres. What was referred as different or fragmented personal identities are formulated as private concerns against which the public sphere has to remain neutral. Those particularities and differences of our personal lives and commitments do not have any political significance, they belong to the private sphere. As can be observed, the realm of politics is defined in the public sphere; and the so-called private concerns are dismissed from the realm of the politics.

³⁰ Mouffe, "Democratic Politics Today", 3.

In liberal democracy the rights that the individuals hold are distinct from each other. "Individual rights correspond to the notion of a private realm of freedom, separate and distinct from that of the public"³¹. These rights pertain to the prevention of any interference -by the state , by other individuals or groups- into the private sphere. What is included in the private sphere are gender, race, religion, ethnicity. Consequently, the public realm is composed of 'citizens' who are supposed to leave behind the characteristics that make them different from each other. This is a public sphere which is based upon the principles of sameness, difference-blindness, and homogeneity and which "relegates all particularity and difference to the private realm"³². This is the situation that Keyman refers to as the 'colonization of the public sphere'³³.

What comes out of this debate in turn is a need for a new conception of citizenship that is going to be adequate for the requirements of pluralism; a new conception of citizenship whose principles have to be responsive to the demands of the plurality of particular identities and to the new political demands posed by globalization. According to the students of democracy who are critical of the liberal strand in democratic tradition, the reason why the modern category of citizenship falls short of being useful for the requirements of cultural pluralism is because it is based on the idea of an abstract universalist definition of the public, opposed to a domain of the private seen as the realm of particularity and

³¹ Dietz, "Context", 66.

³² Mouffe, "Democratic Politics Today", 9.

³³ E.Fuat Keyman, "Nasil Bir Liberal Demokrasi", *Diyalog*, 1/1, 1996, 99.

difference. They argue that although the modern idea of the citizen was indeed crucial for the development of democracy, today it constitutes an obstacle to its extension. The public realm in the liberal democratic conception of citizenship has been based upon the exclusion of all particularities and differences. This exclusion has been seen as inevitable to postulate the generality and universality of the public sphere. The result, of course, has been a homogeneous public and it is within this public sphere that citizenship is defined in liberal tradition. This is why, they suggest, the public sphere should be revitalized. This task of reviving the public sphere in turn requires a broader definition of the realm of politics whose premise will be that of "stressing the political nature of what used to be dismissed as personal or private concerns."³⁴ In that way, the public sphere and therefore the realm of politics will be opened up to differences, to a maximum pluralism. In other words, it will not be excluding the particularities of the different conceptions of good life which are to a very great extent shaped by one's identity on gender, race, religious beliefs, ethnic affiliations which have traditionally been conceptualized as private concerns. Hence, this is the way through which articulation between the public and private spheres should take place.

This articulation has very important implications for the relation between citizenship and identity. Before taking up these implications, however one thing should be made more clear about this new understanding of the public and the private spheres and the new mode of articulation between them. This new understanding challenges and criticizes the conventional public/private distinction,

³⁴ Phillips, *Democracy and Difference*, 86.

but it does not abandon it, instead, it reformulates it. This principle of not abandoning but reformulating the public/private distinction has two important implications : First, in this new formula no aspect of life can be dismissed from the realm of politics by claiming that it is a private concern therefore it is not political. "There should be certain aspects of our lives that we are *entitled* to treat as private, but no aspect that we are *compelled* to treat in this way"³⁵. For example, we should be free to talk publicly on all sexual issues, and none should be excluded from public discussion as inappropriate or better suited to the private domain³⁶. At the same time, we should have the right to keep our sexual lives to ourselves.

Second, due attention should be paid to the difference between the articulation between the two spheres in the form of active citizenship on the one hand and introducing the specific values of a race, gender, ethnic group or a religion into the very definition of citizenship to guide politics on the other. It implies that one's citizenship should not solely be dependent on one's gender, ethnic, religious or racial identity. Here we need a distinction between a sphere of the public and a sphere of the private. "This is the great contribution of political liberalism to modern democracy which guarantees the defense of pluralism and the respect of individual freedom."³⁷

The main objective of this new understanding of the relation between the public and the private spheres is the assertion that the individual will not be

³⁵ Iris Young quoted in Phillips, *Democracy and Difference*, 85, emphasis added.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 85.

³⁷ Mouffe, "Democratic Politics Today", 11.

sacrificed to the citizen. Because the second main point raised by the critics of the liberal democratic citizenship is the abstract notion of 'citizen-individual'. The assertion that the individual is not to be sacrificed to the citizen implies that "the plurality of forms of identities through which we are constituted and which correspond to our insertion in a variety of social relations, as well as their tension, should be legitimized"³⁸.

At this point the notion of 'agonism' becomes very important which is the principle of acknowledging or recognizing the relationship between identity and difference³⁹. In this context what becomes crucial is the opening up of decision-making processes to the demands coming from the public sphere, or more specifically recognizing the participation of civil societal organizations in these decision-making processes in order for the relations between the state and the civil society to become more democratic.

On this issue of the state/civil society relations we see a wide gap between liberal democratic ideals and their realization. At the theoretical level, liberal democracy acknowledges the necessity of representation through political parties and of the influence of interests groups on the decision-making processes which constitute mechanisms for monitoring of the state from below. However, in practice we see that this has not been realized. When we examine the history of the existing liberal democracies we see that political participation has decreased to a considerable extent, the bonds of representation between political parties and civil

³⁸ Ibid., 5.

³⁹ Keyman, "Nasil Bir Liberal Demokrasi", 101.

society have been weakened and even have broken down, and the increasing bureaucratization of the state apparatus has closed the decision-making processes to the demands coming from groups with different identities⁴⁰. The idea of political participation has been limited to mean going to the ballot box in every four or five years.

At this point, the difference or perhaps the clash between two conceptions of freedom, that is, between negative freedom and positive freedom should be mentioned. Negative freedom which is a central principle of the liberal political thought refers specifically to the absence of any interference by the state or by other individuals into one's pursuit of his/her own goals. It is freedom *from*. On the contrary, positive liberty refers to the need to participate democratically in the making and ordering of the polity in which one lives. It is freedom *to*. The latter was the understanding of freedom associated with the notion of citizenship in the ancient Greece, the birthplace of citizenship. In classical times citizenship was not thought of as a separate activity from the daily lives of the people. It was perceived as a means of trying to achieve a better life. Being a good citizen was an integral part of any conception of a good life. In other words, citizenship was not just a means to being free; it was the way of being free itself. Therefore, Aristotle, to whom we owe the earliest thorough discussion of citizenship, declared that the human was *kata phusin zoon politicon*, a creature formed by nature to live a political life.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 103.

In liberal democratic view of citizenship positive freedom is regarded as valuable but secondary; the priority is placed on the former type of freedom i.e. negative freedom- absence of obstacles in the pursuit of individual interests by the atomized, rational 'citizens'. And the critics of liberal democracy reverses this order. They propose that the positive view of liberty should be reincorporated into the concept of citizenship as had been the case in the ancient Greece.

In sum, then, the critics find the liberal democratic conception of citizenship impoverished on the basis that it conceives different 'cultural identities' and the conceptions of good life that find expression in these identities as concerns belonging not to the public (political) but to the private (personal) realm. Because, they claim, while accepting this distinction between the public and the private, liberal democracy also accepts that the state should be 'neutral' against these particular identities and 'closed' to their political reflections which in turn constitute an obstacle for the realization of such core political ideals of democracy as pluralism and participation⁴¹. The critics of liberal democracy suggest that the recognition of the multi-dimensionality of identity and its relation to 'the other' contributes to the reconstruction of the public sphere around a dialogue among different identities⁴².

In the rest of this study we will try to analyze how this critique of the modern notion of citizenship can help us understand and explain the dimensions of the turban question in Turkey. We will try to contextualize this issue with

⁴¹ Levent Köker, "Radical Demokrasi", *Diyalog*, 1/1, 1996, 114.

⁴² Keyman, "Nasil Bir Liberal Demokrasi", 102.

reference to such concepts as identity, difference, national identity, and citizenship.

We will argue that the turban question in Turkey is a case that exemplifies the problematical relationship among these concepts.

CHAPTER 2

WHAT MAKES THE TURBAN QUESTION A 'QUESTION' IN TURKEY?

The theoretical propositions outlined above manifest themselves in the debate over the women's head covering which became politicized in the last few years in Turkey. In this chapter, the turban question will be analyzed within the context of the political polarization between secular modernism and Islamic traditionalism in Turkey. This polarization is one specific case which exemplifies very clearly the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization. The relationship between this polarity on the one hand and the turban affair on the other has to be elaborated carefully in order to understand the current debates over the women's head covering in Turkey. This, in turn, requires an analysis of the Turkish modernization which started early in the nineteenth century.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, concerns regarding the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire led to the formulation of various projects by the Ottoman state persons who hoped to reverse what seemed to be an inevitable process. One of these projects -modernization- became the dominant discourse. The objective of modernization was to put an end to the decline of the Ottoman Empire and to bring it to the level of the contemporary western civilization. Consequently, some reforms began to be undertaken with Sultan Abdulmecit's promulgation of the

Tanzimat Charter in 1839 in the fields of administration, legislation, and education. The reforms embraced various liberal principles such as the equality of people of all religions before the law. In the early republican years, the will to modernization acquired increased momentum. The Kemalist intelligentsia took a sharper turn towards modernization in order to bring Turkey to the level of contemporary Western civilization. In 1922 the Caliphate, Islamic schools, Şeriat courts and the ministries of Şeriat and Evkaf (Pious foundations) were abolished. In 1925 sects and orders were banned and monasteries were closed. In the same two years a unified educational system under a secular Ministry of Public Instruction was established and also a Directorate of Religious Affairs was established. In 1925 all male Turks were compelled to abandon the fez and wear in its place a hat thereby ending social and religious distinctions which had been obvious from a person's headgear. In 1926 the Gregorian calendar was put into effect. Again in 1926, to replace *Şeriat* the Swiss Civil Code, the Italian Penal Code and a commercial code based largely on the German and the Italian commercial codes were adapted. In 1928, the clause referring to Islam as the religion of the Turkish state was removed from the constitution. As Feroz Ahmad observes, the most iconoclastic reform of this period was to replace the Arabic script by the Latin script: "At a stroke, even the literate people were cut off from their past. Overnight, virtually the entire nation was made illiterate"⁴³. The aim of all these changes was to diminish the influence of Muslim culture and weaken the power of

⁴³ Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, (London, New York: Routledge, 1993), 80.

tradition. By placing legislation, education, and the judicial system under secular control religion was tried to be kept out of the public life.

The reforms initiated by both the Ottoman and the Republican elites dramatically influenced the existing cultural practices. The modernizing elites in the Ottoman-Turkish polity were influenced by what Edward Said has referred as Orientalism, the manufactured western image of the Muslim world. Said has defined Orientalism as "an enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage -and even produce- the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period"⁴⁴. He has argued that limitations were imposed by Orientalism on thought and action. He has explained this relationship between the Orient and the Occident by using the concept of 'hegemony' in the Gramscian sense⁴⁵ which refers to cultural leadership and its salience. As a consequence of this cultural hegemony in the Western world we see the development of a collective notion of identifying 'us' Westerners as against all non-Westerners and also a feeling of superiority in comparison with all the non-Western peoples and cultures⁴⁶. In addition to this, there is also the hegemony of European ideas about the Orient "reiterating European superiority over Oriental backwardness usually

⁴⁴ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 3.

⁴⁵ Gramsci makes a distinction between civil and political society in which the former is made up of voluntary associations like schools and families; and the latter of state institutions (the army, the police) whose function is direct domination. Culture operates within civil society where the influence of ideas work not through domination but consent. In any society nontotalitarian then certain cultural forms predominate over others just as certain ideas are more influential than others. The form of this cultural leadership is what Gramsci has called hegemony. (Said, *Orientalism*, 7).

⁴⁶ Said, *Orientalism*, 7.

overriding the possibility that a more independent or more skeptical thinker might have different views on the matter"⁴⁷.

Hence, while the West was taking the leadership of modernity through the ideas of Enlightenment and industrialization, Eastern societies with a time lag, began to emulate the Western model⁴⁸. This development went hand in hand with a process of internalization of Orientalism on the part of the Orient itself which in turn led to the conclusion that it was their 'inferior' culture that should have been blamed for their backwardness vis-a-vis the West. They found themselves in a situation in which they had to measure the backwardness of their nation in terms of certain universal standards set by the advanced nations of Europe. They consequently believed that their inherited cultures did not enable them to reach those standards set by the advanced nations in question and that there was a need to re-equip themselves culturally, that is to transform themselves⁴⁹.

As Kadioğlu points out, Orientalism is deeply ingrained within the literature that endeavors to shed some light on the internal causes of underdevelopment in Third World societies.⁵⁰ This literature constitute the modernization perspective which has its roots in the works of such scholars as Ferdinand Tönnies, Emile Durkheim, and Max Weber. In explaining the origins

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Nilüfer Göle, *Modern Mahrem: Medeniyet ve Örtünme* (Istanbul, Metis Yayınları, 1991), 13.

⁴⁹ Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 4.

⁵⁰ Ayşe Kadioğlu, "Women's Subordination in Turkey: Is Islam Really the Villain?", *Middle East Journal*, Volume 48, No.4, Autumn 1994, 649.

of the modernization process these scholars developed the ideal construction of two polar types of societies: traditional and modern.⁵¹ This framework has been used to define modernization as a transition from the former to the latter.⁵² The basic assumption of this perspective is that the preponderance of traditional features, internal value systems, and institutions constitute both an expression and a cause of underdevelopment that prevent modernization⁵³. Modern is defined by studying Western societies and the traditional is defined not only in terms of a relationship of economic hierarchy and dependence, but also through references to the Islamic nature of some of these traditional societies⁵⁴.

The modernization perspective became the dominant discourse among the reforming elites of the Ottoman-Turkish polity. Indeed, they were native orientalist who were perceiving Islam as a hindrance to development. The reforms undertaken by these elites created a cleavage between western looking bureaucratic elite and the relatively illiterate popular classes whose way of life was being threatened by the new mode of social regulation imposed upon them. The latter took refuge in Islamic precepts arguing that the decline experienced by the Ottoman Empire was caused by the values of the West and the abandonment of the Islamic way of life. Native Orientalists, on the other hand, were pointing to the inferiority of the Muslim tradition. The reforms that began to be undertaken with

⁵¹Toennies has distinguished between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, and Durkheim has distinguished between mechanical and organic solidarity, as characteristics of simple and complex societies respectively. Also see Kadioğlu, "Women's Subordination", 649.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 656.

⁵³ J.S.Valenzuela, & A.Valenzuela, "Modernization and Dependency" in R. Macridis and B. Brown eds. *Comparative Politics: Notes and Readings*, (The Dorsey Press, 1986), 99.

⁵⁴Kadioğlu, "Women's Subordination", 650.

the *Tanzimat* charter were, first traits of the project of replacing a Muslim way of life with a Western way of life. The debate regarding this process was about how to achieve a balance between the materiality of the West and the spirituality of the East. As a result of these cleavages between the leading intellectuals of the time, the main concern was to set limitations to the process of modernization and westernization. The main problematique of the writers between the *Tanzimat* and the Republic was the achievement of a balance between these reforms and Islamic teachings by delineating the possibility of a compatibility between the two⁵⁵. Some leading intellectuals of the time like Abdullah Cevdet, Tevfik Fikret, Semsettin Sami were viewing the European or Western civilization as an indivisible force, and maintained that development was not only a matter of technological advance but also of adopting the western way of thinking and behaving. Consequently, they adopted certain Western codes of conduct and consumption patterns. A second group of writers of that period like Mahmut Esat, Ahmet Mithad, and Namık Kemal, while believing in the importance of and even necessity of civilization, were distinguishing between the good and the bad aspects of the Western civilization while the former corresponded to its material and the latter to its spiritual aspects. According to this point of view nothing should be borrowed from the spiritual aspects of the Western European civilization, only the science and technology should be imported. Hence, the elites were divided among themselves. However, the dominant discourse, until the establishment of the Republic, was the perspective adopted by the second group of intellectuals, who made a distinction

⁵⁵ Göle, *Modern Mahrem*, 17-47.

between the good and bad aspects of the Western civilization. As Göle points out, even the westernists were trying to find legitimacy for their arguments in Islam⁵⁶. It was the emergence of the Kemalists that marked the triumph of westernists over the conservatives.

This concern with the tension between modernity and tradition and the attempt to reach a balance between the two was a recurring theme accompanying Turkish modernization and it can easily be observed in the literary tradition extending from the *Tanzimat* to the Republic. It would be illuminating here to refer to two important novels whose main theme is the extent to which Westernization should be understood. One of these is *Felatun Bey ile Rakım Efendi* by Ahmet Mithad which was published in 1876; and the other is Recaizade Ekrem's novel *Araba Sevdası* which was published in 1896.⁵⁷ The first novel is a comparison of an imitative, cosmetic, and skin-deep and therefore unpreferred model of Westernization on the one hand, and a preferred one which is distinguished from the first one by an effort to hold on to indigenous cultural values. Felatun Bey is depicted as the representative of the former, whereas Rakım Efendi represents the latter model of Westernization. Felatun Bey is from a very rich family, and spends his time gambling and entertaining with women. Rakım Efendi, on the other hand, is a serious, hard-working, and modest person. It is obvious in the novel that Rakım Efendi is presented as the representative of the

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷For a review of these two novels, see Şerif Mardin, *Türk Modernleşmesi* (Turkish Modernization), pp. 36-40. Mardin discusses these novels by contextualizing them in the Turkish modernization process.

preferred model of Westernization by keeping away from exaggerated consumption and by holding to such traditional values as modesty.

Bihruz Bey is the character of the second well-known novel which exemplifies the concern with the limits of Westernization mentioned above. Bihruz Bey is a lazy, incompetent man but nevertheless lives a comfortable life thanks to his father's fortunes. He constantly makes fun of the traditional costumes of the Turks and refers to them as barbaric. He dresses himself in the European style with expensive costumes. This character of Bihruz Bey is depicted as the representative of the cosmetic Westernization with the purpose of criticizing that trend.

In addition to the difficult task of balancing the requirements of modernization and tradition, the two novels also illustrate another such recurring theme, the utmost importance given by the westernists to the changes in life styles. The consumption items from clothes to furniture, have always had a symbolic value in Turkish modernization. Those intellectuals who viewed Western civilization as a totality tried to change their life styles too. The conservatives, on the other hand, were maintaining that only material civilization of the West should be taken and not the non-material aspects.

In this context it does not come as a surprise that the third recurring issue accompanying the Turkish modernization came to be identified with the 'woman question'. Since the changes in life styles can best be observed in the changes in women's lives, the litmus test for modernization has been the changing role and status of women in the society. The native Orientalists, who perceived the indigenous cultural traits that basically derived from an Islamic way of life as an

obstacle on the road to civilization, made the veiling and the seclusion of women an open target of attack. They viewed these traditions as the symbols of the oppressive nature and the backwardness of Islam. One of these intellectuals, Abdullah Cevdet, for instance argued that the main reason for the backwardness and inferiority of the Muslim societies was such "degenerated traditions" as veil, polygyny and the seclusion of genders.⁵⁸ Consequently, some reforms with the aim of improving the status of women were initiated by the modernizing/Westernizing elites of the time. The 1858 Land Reform gave equal inheritance rights to girls and boys; secondary schools and teachers' and midwifery schools for girls were opened.⁵⁹ As a result of such changes during the Second Constitutional Period (1909-1918), in the atmosphere of relative freedom created by the 1908 Young Turk Revolution, women increasingly began to move into the public sphere. For instance, educated women from the intellectual circles of the cities started publishing magazines and forming women associations.⁶⁰ The increasing public appearance of women, in turn, brought with it the discussions about the veiling of women, because women had begun to dress in accordance with the Western fashion and to behave more flexibly with regard to veiling.

This change in position of women was a serious challenge to the traditional Islamic values that shaped the public life and hence the relations between men and women. Those intellectuals who were in favor of only material

⁵⁸ Göle, *Modern Mahrem*, 31.

⁵⁹ Şirin Tekeli, *Kadınlar ve Siyasal Toplumsal Hayat* (İstanbul: Birikim Yayınları, 1986), 182.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

borrowing from the Western civilization were against these changes in the position of the women and their increasing visibility in the public realm. As opposed to the first group of intellectuals who established a parallelism between the improvement of the women' s social position and social progress, these intellectuals were claiming that there could be only a negative correlation between women' s freedom and progress. Said Halim Pasha, for instance, went as far as arguing that civilizations throughout the history had come to the point of decay and disappearance with women's gaining their full freedoms⁶¹. The conservatives maintained that the decline experienced by the Ottoman Empire was caused by the abandonment of the Islamic way of life and that without loyalty to the Islamic precepts the society would be dissolved. For them women's moving into the public life was contrary to an Islamic way of life. They believed that the progress was possible only if Sharia (Islamic law) became the organizing principle of the society. Eventually, women's dress came to be the symbol of being either a Westernist or an Islamist; that is either a reformist or a conservative⁶². For the initiators of the reforms, unveiling of women was the symbol of women's emancipation from religious bonds.

In fact, these three recurring issues, achievement of a balance between modernity and tradition, the preoccupation with costumes and life styles, and the debates concerning women- should be viewed as part of a broader picture. These debates and the accompanying reforms initiated by westernizing elites during the

⁶¹ Göle, *Modern Mahrem*, 30.

⁶² Aynur Ilyasoğlu, *Örtülü Kimlik* (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1991), 50.

period extending from the *Tanzimat* to the Republic were the first steps of a great social engineering project whose aim was to create a public composed of secular-minded, rational, modernized, westernized, that is 'civilized' citizens. In today's political context this project of social engineering is referred to as Kemalism.

Secularism and positivism were the two pillars of the modernization efforts throughout the *Tanzimat* (1839), *Islahat Fermanı* (Reform Decree)(1856), The First Constitutional Period (1876-1909) and the Second Constitutional Period (1909-1918). They reached their institutional and ideological peak in 1923 with the establishment of the secular republic.

The Kemalist elite took a much sharper turn toward modernization, with the goal of taking the newly established Turkish Republic to the level contemporary western civilization (*muassır medeniyet seviyesi*). It should be noted here that Kemalist project of modernization was different from the modernization efforts that had been in process since the nineteenth century in one crucial respect: the modernizing/westernizing elites of the *Tanzimat* and the early Republican period experienced a duality. Their main preoccupation was how to achieve a balance between the materiality of the West and the spirituality of the East. They even tried to find legitimacy for their actions in Islam. The Kemalist project of Westernization, on the other hand, broke away with this duality turning its face completely to the West. The Istanbul correspondent of a foreign newspaper was underlining this point when he wrote "the Turkish republic has broken all of its ties with the Asian traditions, adopted Western civilization with its mentality,

ideals, and principles; it has definitely said good-bye to the East."⁶³ In other words, Kemalist modernization and the nationalism of 1923 mark the triumph of the Westernists over the conservatives in this debate. Hence, the establishment of the Republic was the beginning of another phase in the Turkish modernization process where the East/West duality has been addressed by creating a new 'nation' and a civilization.

The notion of an Islamic state was anathema to Mustafa Kemal and his supporters. They thought that such a state would maintain the status quo and perpetuate the backwardness of Turkey. The Kemalists wanted to see Turkey transformed into a modern nation-state which, in the words of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk would "live as an advanced and civilized nation in the midst of contemporary civilization."⁶⁴ In Atatürk's view such a nation had to be secular, rational, and give priority to scientific development. The goal of transforming Turkey into a modern nation-state denoted a much more radical change than a change in the state system from monarchy to republic. Its objective was to change social modes of conduct, life styles, and even ways of thinking and worldviews.

As Feroz Ahmad observes, the Kemalists regarded themselves as the molders of the public opinion and the vanguard destined to lead Turkey into the modern world into civilized nations.⁶⁵ They were devoted to the idea of change and were impatient with tradition which they saw as a barrier to progress. The

⁶³ Göle, *Modern Mahrem*, (translated by the author)49.

⁶⁴ Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, 53.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 77.

Kemalists embraced the idea that civilization is a totality which cannot be separated into two distinct parts and therefore should be adopted in toto.⁶⁶ Moreover, they claimed that "civilization is defined in universal terms, time and context free, and is certainly not the product of a particularistic culture. This, in turn, meant an embracement of a universalistic definition of modernization. At the same time, the Kemalists maintained that this conception of modernization "needs to be backed up by political will to master the particularistic religious culture and progress is conceived and posed in oppositional terms to the local Islamic culture."⁶⁷ The main goal according to this formulation was that of being liberated from the chains of a particularistic culture in order to reach the level of contemporary civilization. "The destruction of the Ottoman Empire proved to be a blessing, for the Turks were now free to rediscover themselves and to make a fresh start by abandoning a decadent part. This attitude was also in keeping with the influence of the French revolutionary tradition and positivism on radical thought."⁶⁸ The Kemalists were inspired by the Jacobin tradition .

In an attempt to create a totally new society, Kemalists had to create "a new type of Turk very different from the Ottoman."⁶⁹ However, this was easier said than done, because they had inherited a society in which the notion of a Turkish identity was almost non-existent. Until the nineteenth century people had been

⁶⁶ Göle, "Authoritarian Secularism and Islamist Politics: The Case of Turkey", in *Civil Society in the Middle East*, A.R. Norton ed., (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), 22.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, 77.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

identifying themselves by their religious affiliation. Moreover, it should be noted here that in the late Ottoman Empire 'Turk' was a pejorative term used for the unsophisticated and peasants, tribesmen or small-town dwellers. People, if they had a choice, preferred to be identified as 'Ottomans', members of a stratum with its own culture and language (called Ottoman and not Turkish) which transcended the bounds of race and religion. It was the Europeans who spoke of "Turkey" and "Turks"⁷⁰.

However, the foundation of a modern nation-state was seen as "the key element of the will to civilization"⁷¹. Moreover, it was during this process of creating a nation-state that the two pillars of the Turkish modernization, namely secularism and positivism, began to dominate the whole scene. As Metin Heper has pointed out, the idea of the state employed by the Kemalists was derived from a reaction to two fundamental problems which they saw as the main cause of the decline of the Ottoman Empire.⁷² First, the Ottoman State was identified with the personal rule of the sultan which eventually led to its inability to compete with the European nation-states system. Second, the Islamic basis of the Ottoman state was regarded as the primary obstacle to progress and the main cause of the perpetuation of the backwardness in Ottoman society.⁷³ "For the Kemalist intelligentsia, therefore, there was a need to create a nation-state distinct from the person of the sultan and secular enough to reduce Islam to the realm of individual

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Keyman, "Global Modernity and Nationalism", 102.

⁷² Metin Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey* (Washington: The Eothen Press, 1985), 49-50.

⁷³ See also Keyman, "Global Modernity and Nationalism", pp109-110 for an analysis of Heper's account of the notion of the state employed by the Kemalists.

faith."⁷⁴ According to Heper, what underlied the idea of the state employed by the Kemalists is that Atatürk and his associates were influenced by the Durkheimian conception of the state as the agent of rationality. As he points out, according to Durkheim "the role of the state is not to express the unconsidered thoughts of the crowd, but rather add to them more mature thoughts."⁷⁵ The state takes its inspiration from the genuine feelings and desires of the nation. Atatürk assumed that the people had great potential. It was necessary, however, to activate this potential. The people by themselves were neither willing nor capable of achieving this basic goal. During the long centuries of personal rule of the sultans the people had lost their capacity to take the initiative.⁷⁶ Atatürk's conclusion was that reforms needed to be imposed from above. Consequently, the Kemalist idea of the state was ""embedded in the question of how to activate the people toward the goal of civilization, that is, how to construct a national identity compatible with the will to civilization."⁷⁷ This, in turn, indicates the manufactured character of the republican Turkish identity. Therefore, as Kadioğlu argues, the question of nationality in the Turkish polity was not posed as 'Who are the Turks?', but rather as 'Who and/or how are the Turks going to be?'⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Keyman, "Global Modernity and Nationalism", 103.

⁷⁵ Heper, *The State Tradition*, 50.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Keyman, "Global Modernity and Nationalism", 103.

⁷⁸ Ayşe Kadioğlu, "The Paradox of Turkish Nationalism and the Construction of Official Identity", *Turkey: Identity, Democracy, Politics*, S. Kedourie ed. (London: Frank Cass and Co.Ltd., 1996), 121.

This process of the construction of the national identity is crucial in understanding the debates over the turban question in Turkey. It was during that debate that the relationship between public and private spheres on the one hand and the notion of citizenship on the other came to the agenda. The creation of a secular national identity excluded and marginalized Islamic identity. Islam disappeared from the public realm and was reduced to the realm of individual faith.

The very target of the Kemalist reformers was the hold of religion on the polity and the society. "One basic goal was to bring institutional secularization as disengagement to its logical conclusion: to completely free the polity from religious considerations. Islam was not supposed to have even the function of a 'civil religion' for the Turkish polity."⁷⁹ As Sencer Ayata has argued, the government not only tried to contain the role of Islam in society, but also took steps to reform Islam according to its own vision "the aim was gradual crystallization of a Turkish concept of Islam as a religion in the Western, i.e. the post French Revolution, sense of the term."⁸⁰ It was to resemble the Protestant tradition that placed emphasis on the absolute privacy of individual conscience."⁸¹

As Richard Tapper has argued, Atatürk was aware of the dual functions of religion: the private one of giving intellectual and emotional meaning to life, an ethics, an eschatology and the promise of salvation; and the public function of

⁷⁹ Metin Heper, "Islam, Polity and Society: A Middle Eastern Perspective", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 18 (1991), 350.

⁸⁰ Sencer Ayata, "Patronage, Party and the State: the Politicization of Islam in Turkey", *Middle East Journal*, Volume 50, No.1, Winter 1996, 42.

⁸¹ Heper, "Islam, Polity and Society", 351.

providing a political ideology, a cultural and communal identity and social solidarity. He was not openly against Islam in the former role, but (like many of his predecessors) strongly disapproved of the latter.⁸² His solution to the quest for a unifying value system as the foundation of the newly established nation-state was that of replacing religion with a modern secular ideology and the values of republican rationalism. The Kemalists took rationalism as a substitute for Islam. Consequently, the answer to the question of 'who and/or how are the Turks going to be?' was found in the creation of a public composed of nationalist, scientifically minded, anti-traditional, secular individuals. The public realm would be composed of intelligent, cooperative, patriotic, and moral '**citizens**' in addition to their above-mentioned characteristics.

This conception of the relationship between citizenship and religion through a separation of public and private spheres was a Western, or more specifically, a post French Revolution idea which has developed together with the notion of nation-state. By adopting this stance towards religion, the republican elites in Turkey tried to take the religion out of the public sphere. To use Şerif Mardin's term they "showed a clear distaste for religion" and consequently, they initiated radical changes on the state structure and public institutions.

Two observations can be made regarding the Turkish modernization process. First, rather than Anglo-Saxon liberalism, French Jacobinism, with its highly centralized model of change became the prototype for reform of Turkish

⁸² Richard Tapper, "Introduction" in *Islam in Modern Turkey: Religion, Politics and Literature in a Secular State*, ed. R. Tapper (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 1991), 5-6.

modernists. Hence, "secularization itself became part of that process of social engineering rather than an outcome of the process of modernization and societal development"⁸³. This was closely related to the fact that in Turkey, as in other Muslim countries, secularism has been considered to be the prerequisite of Westernization rather than democratization. As a result, secularism as a modernist ideology in Turkey, is linked to the state's control of the public sphere⁸⁴. "Turkish secularism has meant the banning of religious orders, dress codes for public servants, and the imposition of certain types of audio-visual programming at state radio stations and television channels."⁸⁵ The purpose here was that of teaching and imposing a modern way of life and thereby excluding and marginalizing the Islamic identity.

The second observation that we can make regarding the Kemalist reforms is that, those reforms extended far beyond the modernization of state apparatus and the transition to a secular republic from a multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire. They attempted to change the lifestyles, the ways the people behave and think; they attempt to change the self-conception of the Turks. This was due to the fact that the Kemalist elites took Western civilization as an indivisible force. "The project of *modernization* in a Muslim country takes a very different turn from Western *modernity* in that it imposes a political will to 'westernize' the cultural code, modes of life, and gender identities. The Turkish history of modernization can be

⁸³ Nilüfer Göle, "Secularism and Islamism in Turkey: The making of Elites and Counter-Elites", *Middle East Journal*, Volume 51, No.1, Winter 1997, 48.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 49.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

considered a radical example of such a cultural shift, one that actualizes a *civilizational conversion*.⁸⁶ The aim of the secularization efforts in question was to teach and impose an modern way of life which was considered to be homogenous and standardized.

As part of this social engineering project, the secular elites employed a distinction between a 'civilized' and an 'uncivilized' way of life. They were referring to these categories as *a la franca* (European way), and *a la turca* (the Turkish way) respectively. Hence, being 'civilized' implied having such characteristics as wearing neckties, shaving beards and mustaches, eating with fork and knife, husband and wife walking hand-in-hand in the streets, wearing hats, going to the theater, and listening to classical western music.⁸⁷ As for the women, for one thing they had to uncover their heads.

These changes in life styles were illustrating a cultural shift from an Islamic to a Western culture. This shift, in turn, has created a social stratification in the Turkish society. As Göle points out, rather than the concept of "social class" that explains social inequalities in terms of economic power, the concept of "status group" that includes life styles and cultural codes defines social stratification in

⁸⁶ Göle, "Authoritarian Secularism", 21, emphasis added.

⁸⁷It is meaningful to refer to a recent event, the opening concert of the Ankara Music Festival that took place on 31 March, 1997, which illustrates that these kind of attributes of being a civilized, secular citizen are still being given the utmost importance, even an unwarranted importance. At that occasion Mr. Süleyman Demirel, the President of Republic, greeted the orchestra and the crowd in the concert hall by saying "Look! This is the picture of the modern Turkey." The crowd (approximately ten thousand people) applauded enthusiastically and responded with the slogan "Turkey is a secular country and will remain so!" (*Türkiye laiktir, laik kalacak!*). This event has occupied an important place in the Turkish media during the following week after the concert. The concert was being referred to as "the feast of civilization" (*medeniyet şöleni*), "the day of modernity" (*çağdaşlık günü*), "the magnificent concert" (*muhteşem konser*).

Turkish society.⁸⁸ It is in this realm of cultural codes and life styles that the struggle between Republican elites and Islamists has been taking place since the early years of the Republic. It was not, therefore, surprising that women's headdress was always, and continues to be, a major concern for both the Republican secular elites and the Islamists. The Kemalists, like their predecessors, were influenced by the Orientalist narrative of Islam which maintained that Islam is the main obstacle on the road to civilization and that this backwardness and the oppressive nature of Islam was epitomized in the veiled women.

The penetration of secularism into the daily lives of the people is best illustrated by women's physical and social visibility. Participation of women in public life and their socialization with men defined the modern secular way of life and indicated a shift away from an Islamic way of life. Women, as the representatives of this new modern way of life, were becoming increasingly visible in public life; they were appearing in photographs as unveiled women, women in athletic competitions, women pilots, women professionals in European clothing.

The reforms initiated by the Kemalist elites to improve the women's position in society were part of a broader project of reorganizing life by replacing a form of social organization framed by Islam with a secular western one. Two of these reforms were responsible for dramatic improvements in women's lives: the 1926 adoption of the Swiss Civil Code and the 1934 passage of universal suffrage. The Civil Code encouraged women's recognition as citizens within the polity by declaring polygyny and marriage by proxy illegal and granting women equal rights

⁸⁸ Göle, "Secularism and Islamism", 51.

with men regarding divorce, custody of children and inheritance. Women were given the right to vote in local elections in 1932 and national elections in 1934.

The striking thing about these reforms regarding Turkish women is that women did not have to organize themselves into a protest movement or a pressure group to struggle for their rights. The founding fathers of the Republic, under the leadership of Kemal Atatürk, granted full rights of citizenship to women about a decade after the War of Independence. Men, rather than women promoted women's rights in Turkey. Yesim Arat calls this situation as "the patriarchal paradox"⁸⁹, because in a patriarchal society like Turkey, it is assumed that the unequal power relationship between men and women work against women to keep them away from public life. As we have seen, however, the reforms introduced by male Kemalist intelligentsia granted full rights of citizenship to women which allowed a status for women which did not exist even in many Western democracies at that time.

This makes one ask why the Kemalist intelligentsia introduced these reforms. Was the granting of women's rights an end in itself, or was it a strategic move to serve other ends? Şirin Tekeli has argued that they were means to an end rather than ends in themselves.⁹⁰ According to Tekeli, the main goal was to utilize the symbolic value of the improvement of women's status in society. More specifically, the efforts to change the women's position was means of westernizing the country.

⁸⁹ Yeşim Arat, *The Patriarchal Paradox: Women Politicians in Turkey* (London & Toronto: Associated University Press, 1989), 131.

⁹⁰ Tekeli, *Kadınlar*, 216.

The goal of transforming Turkey into a civilized nation and Atatürk's sensitivity toward European's perception of Turkish women can easily be observed in his speeches. On an occasion Atatürk declared that:

In some places I see women who hide their faces and eyes by throwing a piece of fabric, a scarf, or something like that over their heads, even when a man passes by, they turn their backs to him or close up by sitting on the ground. What is the meaning and explanation of this behavior? Gentlemen, would the mothers and daughters of a civilized nation assume such an absurd and vulgar pose? This is a situation that ridicules our nation. It has to be corrected immediately.⁹¹

On the question of transforming the nation into a western civilized entity Kandiyoti points out that the concern with women's rights, particularly about the issues of seclusion, veiling and polygyny, coincided with a broader agenda on 'progress'.⁹² The new women of the Kemalist era became an explicit symbol of the break with the past, a symbolism which Mustafa Kemal himself did much to promote. He did so personally through the inclusion of Latife Hanım, his wife, in his public tours, through his relations with his adoptive daughters and through his broader endorsement of women's visibility. This has had a decisive influence on the socialization of the whole generation of women who internalized the Kemalist message and forged new identities as professionals as well as patriots.⁹³

⁹¹From a speech that Atatürk delivered in Kastamonu on August 30, 1925, in Zehra Arat, "Turkish Women and the Republican Reconstruction of Tradition" in M. Göçek and S. Balaghi, eds., *Reconstructing Gender in the Middle East: Tradition, Identity and Power* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 105.

⁹² D. Kandiyoti, "End of Empire: Islam, Nationalism, and Women in Turkey" in *Woman, Islam and the State*, D.Kandiyoti ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), 36.

⁹³ Ibid., 41.

In analyzing the historical background of the construction of national identity in Turkey, especially during the single-party period (1923-1945), there are four critical points that can be extrapolated: First and foremost, the notion of Turkish national identity was constructed on the basis of the notion of citizenship. Second, this notion of citizenship was formulated as a "militant citizen"⁹⁴ who is both the object and the subject of the Kemalist will to civilization. On one side citizens were viewed as the objects to be controlled and to be transformed into civilized persons, and on the other side, they were viewed as acting subjects, carriers of the project of modernization/westernization into the future generations. Third, this notion of citizenship is constructed upon the duties rather than rights of the 'citizen' who privileges his/her *citizen identity* over his/her *individuality*.⁹⁵ This in turn has been implemented by locating those aspects of identity that make individuals and groups different from each other in the private, as has been the case in Europe where the modern category of citizenship has developed. Fourth, this particular notion of national identity based upon the notion of citizenship has taken a monolithic character, by closing the public realm to the plurality of cultural differences.⁹⁶ In this understanding politics is defined on the basis of the priority of the 'common good' of the society as opposed to the priority of addressing different demands of a pluralist society.

⁹⁴ Füsün Üstel, "Cumhuriyetten Bu Yana Yurttaş Profili" (The Profile of Citizenship Since the Republic), *Yeni Yüzyıl*, April, 24, 1996.

⁹⁵ E.Fuat Keyman, "Kemalism, Modernite, Gelenek" (Kemalism, Modernity and Tradition), *Toplum ve Bilim*, No. 72, 1997, 90.

⁹⁶ The term 'cultural differences' is here used to denote the process of differentiation among the identities which are shaped according to religious, ethnic affiliations, ideology and/or worldviews and differences in life styles preferences.

Since the major concern of this study is the turban affair in Turkey and since it takes this affair as part of the phenomenon of the rise of Islamic identity in Turkey, we have paid a special attention to the relation between the process of construction of national identity on one hand, and the state's attitude toward religion on the other. We have seen that the principle of secularism and positivism played the most important role in the process of the construction of the Turkish national identity which in turn resulted in the exclusion and marginalization of the Islamic identity. We have also seen that the origins of this principle of secularism goes back to the nineteenth century, to the first efforts of westernizing the country, but it reaches its peak with the emergence of the secular republican elites after 1923.

To speak in terms of the theoretical framework laid down in the previous chapter, the development of the notion of citizenship in the Turkish polity was embedded in the process of creating a homogenous public. From the point of view of religion this meant embracing the post French Revolution idea of religion as a private affair, belonging to the realm of individual conscience. This conceptualization of citizenship in the Turkish context also takes us to the historical origins of the current debates over women's headdress and the concomitant polarization between seculars and Islamists in Turkey. Although the Kemalist elites did not go as far as outlawing the veil, it was strongly discouraged as was examined above. Unveiling of women was viewed as the symbol of taking religion out of the public realm.

The case of women exemplifies very well the process of construction of the Turkish national identity on the basis of the notion of citizenship as a "militant citizen". On one hand they were the objects of the "Kemalist will to civilization" in that they were the most important section of the population to be changed, to be transformed into civilized persons.⁹⁷ They were strongly encouraged to uncover themselves, to adopt civilized manners of behaving. At the same time, they were the subjects, the bearers of the Kemalist will to civilization. Thus, the position of women is extremely important in understanding the development of the notion of citizenship in the Turkish polity. More specifically, it is where we see most clearly the relationship between this militant citizenship and religion, which is built in the separation of public and private and the confinement of religion within the public domain of the individual believer. The unveiling of women, their increasing visibility in the public realm signified this separation. So, it is out of this historical context that women's headdress has been a major issue in Turkey.

⁹⁷ Keyman, "Kemalism, Modernite, Gelenek", 101.

CHAPTER 3

THE POLITICIZATION OF THE WOMEN'S HEAD-DRESS IN THE POST-1980 PERIOD

The previous chapter was concerned with the profile of the citizen during the single-party period in Turkey. It was seen that secularism played the most important role in the shaping of this profile. However, it is often pointed out that despite the clear distaste for religion shown by the Republican secular elites and despite the fact that they have attempted the most radical secularization among the Muslim countries, the Kemalist ideology could not replace Islam in the lives of the people. The Republican elites' attempts to create a new ideology was only skin-deep and was not internalized by all the classes. In this context it does not come as surprise that the issue of women's veiling has remained a major issue during the following decades.

The single-party period came to an end in Turkey with the coming to power of the Democrat Party after the 1950 general elections. With this transition to a multi-party system, the Islam-state relationship has undergone a transformation. This chapter will be an examination of the main dynamics of this relationship and of the question of how this general issue has been reflected on the controversy over the women's head-dress throughout the multi-party period. This period will be divided into two: the 1950-1980 period and post-1980 period will be analyzed separately. This periodization is not without a basis. The 1980s marked

the beginning of a new era in Turkish political life with regard to the state-pluralism relationship especially from the point of view of religion. A trend has been set towards challenging the early Kemalist principles. During the last ten to fifteen years, as opposed to the presentation of the case by the official state discourse, it has increasingly become clear that the Turkish society is not a homogenous entity. The differences that were delegated to the private have increasingly begun to be visible in the public. Especially after the 1980 military intervention Turkey has come face to face with problems stemming from the political demands on the basis of cultural differences. The rise of Islamic identity, the demands for recognition by the Kurdish population and the rise of Kurdish nationalism, the rise of Alevi identity were among the most important developments in that sense. Besides, the feminist movement has been effective in putting the 'woman question' at the center of the process of "rewriting Turkish historiography"⁹⁸. Despite significant differences among them, all these movements directly challenge the unifying conception of cultural identity on the basis of which secularist Turkish nationalism reproduces itself. Two of these developments have been especially influential in this increasing awareness of the differences that are tried to be covered by the concept of 'Turkish national identity': one is the rise of Islamic identity since 1980, and the other is the resurgence of Kurdish nationalism in an organized form.

What is most important from the point of view of this study is the fact that Turkey, like several other Middle Eastern countries, has been experiencing the

⁹⁸ Keyman, "Global Modernity and Nationalism", 95.

political revitalization of Islam since the early 1980s. Bassam Tibi distinguishes between 'traditional' and 'political' Islam in accounting for the sociopolitical factors behind the politicization of Islam: whereas traditional Islam is confined mostly within the private domain of the believer, political Islam has pushed its way into the public realm⁹⁹. Political Islam sees itself as having a political mission. The factors behind the rise of political Islam in Turkey will be analyzed later in this chapter, but it should be said from the outset that it is with the *emergence* of the difference between traditional and political Islam that the turban question became a *political issue* in Turkey. This claim would be more comprehensible if we first make an analysis of the main characteristics of the state-religion relationship and of how this general issue was reflected on the question of women's veiling during the earlier decades.

The 1950s were the years of the Democrat Party (DP) government as the majority party. The DP's attitude towards religion was different from the militant secularism of the Republican People's Party, the party of the single party period. It had a more flexible attitude with regard to the religious circles in the society which is often pointed out as a major reason behind the success of the DP at the 1950 general elections. After coming to power, the DP converted the *Ezan* (the call for prayer) into Arabic again and allowed the opening new Quoran courses and other Islamic educational institutions. Accordingly, the new government adopted a more flexible attitude towards women's headcovering. This in turn faced with a serious criticism from the opposition so much so that on March 13, 1956 three members of

⁹⁹ Bassam Tibi, *Islam and the Cultural Accommodation of Social Change* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990), 25.

parliament who at the same time were members of Turkish Women's Association came up with a bill aiming at the prohibition of *çarşaf*, a particular dress that covers the whole body except the eyes.¹⁰⁰ The motive behind this attempt was the claim that this particular dress was humiliating for the Turkish nation. Although this bill was not debated in the parliament, it generated considerable interest among the public.

It should be noted, however, that in the 1950s Turkish women were not playing an active role in the public life. The idealized image of the Turkish woman, who is supposed to reach a balance between a certain degree of westernization and the maintenance of traditional values, had not been internalized by the majority of women. Those who found a place in arts, politics, or science were either the ones who had been totally westernized and alienated from their own society, or those who conceived westernization as a change only in their life styles. Hence, this minority group had already got rid of their headcovers. They had accepted this as the *sine qua non* of being a civilized person. The majority, on the other hand, mostly in rural areas, had never given up veiling themselves. However, it would be a mistake to view these women as the representatives of a protest movement against the westernizing reforms of the time. Instead, they represented the continuation of traditional modes of behavior rather than a political mission. In other words, although it was a debated issue, women's headdress was not a political issue in the 1950s. The westernists who were against the veiling of women perceived it as an improper, or rather, uncivilized way of dressing that

¹⁰⁰ Cihan Aktaş, *Kılık Kıyafet ve İktidar*, (İstanbul: Nehir Yayınları, 1989), v.1, 219.

ridiculed the Turkish nation in the eyes of the western nations. It was not perceived as a symbol of a reactionary movement aiming at the elimination of the impact of the Republican reforms in the society. This was not what the veiled women had in mind either.

This has continued to be the case during the 1960s too, although the attitude of the governments toward religion differed from that of the DP. On May 27, 1960 a military intervention took place in Turkey. The military stated that the main reason behind the intervention was that the previous government had taken steps challenging the Republican principles. Short after the intervention, Cemal Gürsel, head of the National Unity Committee, said that they would not tolerate those who used religious beliefs for political purposes. In the same speech he referred to *çarşaf* as a shame for the Turkish women.¹⁰¹

In 1960, the Mustafa Kemal Association organized a meeting and prepared its program for the struggle against the veil which continued throughout the decade. According to this program, “all distinguished women were asked to deliver their overcoats to those women who had to wear *çarşaf* since they could not afford to buy one”.¹⁰²

During the 1960s some local measures were taken to prevent the wearing of *çarşaf*. What is striking about these developments is the persistence of the preoccupation with ‘civilized’ and ‘uncivilized’ costumes and lifestyles among the westernists. As against the veiled women, women who wore mini-skirts which

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 228.

¹⁰² Ibid., translated by the author.

became quite fashionable during the 1960s, were portrayed as the idealized, modern, civilized Turkish women.

Within the same time period an institution called Modern Life Education Center (Modern Hayat Öğretim Yurdu) organized nine-month courses in squatter settlements in Ankara with the aim of teaching young women how to dress, talk, walk, and eat like a 'modern woman'. At the end of the course, the successful students would get a certificate which gave them the attribute of modern woman.¹⁰³

The late 1960s were also the years when feminist ideas began to be voiced in Turkey. The feminists of the time were claiming that the rights granted to women were not being exercised by the majority of Turkish women. The major reason for them was the ignorance of those women who needed to be educated and rescued from the 'primitive' life they were living which unquestionably included rescuing them from the veil. The veil was seen as an obstacle on the way to become a modern woman who learns, develops her skills and fights for her rights.

What is most significant for our purposes about the 1950s and 1960s is that during this period we cannot talk about the issue of women's headress as a political issue. However, the 1970s were different in the sense that it was the period during which the notion of Islamic identity began to take shape. During the student movements of the late 1960s, the Islamist groups were included in the right-wing camp together with the nationalist groups. In the following years, however, these groups began to differentiate themselves from each other.

Especially the late 1970s were the years during which extensive debates took place within the Islamic movement. The identity, social status and role of

women and veiling were the issues at the heart of these debates. During the time period in question women had begun to play an active role in the public realm in such areas as education, workplace, and cultural activities. This in turn had unleashed debates over traditional gender roles.

The Iranian Revolution of 1979 was quite influential in the way that veiled women were perceived in Turkey. The most striking thing about the Islamic movement that dismantled the Shah regime in Iran was the active role that women played during the Revolution. After that the debate over the veil has acquired a new dimension. The political role of Islam and the militancy of the veiled women began to be discussed. By that time, some Islamic periodicals had begun to be published in which women were being warned against the passivity of Muslims and were called to read, write and think about their identities. The aim was to help the process of the development of a new Muslim women identity different from the traditional Muslim women of the earlier decades. At the same time, though they were very few, veiled students had become visible at universities at large metropolitan centers.

These developments leading to the emergence of the notion of Islamic identity during the 1970s were the first traits of political Islam which has risen in the 1980s in Turkey as has been the situation in several other Middle Eastern countries. The many factors behind the current revitalization of Islam have been the concern of numerous studies in the literature. With regard to the Turkish case, it can be argued that several international and internal factors have played

¹⁰³ Ibid., 236.

important roles in the rise of political Islam which in turn has opened up a new chapter in the debate over the women's headdress.

The most critical international development has been the process of globalization. Ayşe Kadioğlu argues that one of the most significant consequences of globalization is the shattering of homogenous, standardized cultures in an international order whose main political actors were the nation-states¹⁰⁴. In this respect globalization paradoxically led to the emergence of local identities.

It is meaningful to refer at this point to Ronald Robertson's analysis of this paradox from the point of view of religion. According to Robertson it would be erroneous to view the contemporary politicization of religion as constituting a unique historical circumstance, because,

what stands out as unique in historical and comparative perspectives is the strength of the process of differentiation which yielded relatively separate spheres of politics and religion, as well as the force of the myths that have sustained these processes¹⁰⁵.

In a parallel line of thinking, Stachouse notes that the ideas that religion is and should be 'private' and 'non-political' and the state is 'public' and secular derive in large measure from the enormous impact that a specific religious tradition has had upon modern Western social life¹⁰⁶. However, while there can be no doubt about the intra-western origins of these ideas, their impact has not been restricted to western societies. The ideas concerning the distinctiveness of the private non-

¹⁰⁴Kadioğlu, "The Paradox of Turkish Nationalism", 130.

¹⁰⁵ Robertson, "Globalization, Politics, Religion", 12.

¹⁰⁶ Cited in *ibid.*, 14.

political nature of religion; and the public and secular nature of the state, which Stachouse traces to a specific religious tradition in the West, spread across most of the world between the early nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Robertson observes that whenever these ideas were in circulation, they clearly encountered indigenous civilizational conceptions of the relationship between state and religion. He cites Turkey as one of the places that has been experiencing this problematical situation. Robertson concludes by claiming that "religion has been politicized quite drastically during the past fifteen years or so following a period of diffusion of the idea, of the separateness of the spheres of religion and politics"¹⁰⁷.

These arguments about the relevance of the contemporary process of globalization to the phenomenon of the politicization of religion also exemplifies the tension between the universal and the particular, or, between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization accompanying the process of globalization that we have referred before. Moreover, this discussion provides further insight to our earlier contextualization of the question of the state-religion relation with reference to the Orientalist discourse.

What we can extrapolate from the arguments about globalization is that the total exposure of the Turkish society to global modernity, which gained momentum with the adoption of the liberal, export-oriented economic policies, has radically transformed identity conceptions and social configurations in Turkey. This process has been accelerated by the exposure of the Turkish public to world wide television channels. In addition to that, the emergence of various Turkish

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 13-14.

television channels has made it difficult to maintain the monolithic Turkish identity which has been depicted by the state-owned public channels. These radical transformations in identity conceptions and social configurations, however, led to ambivalence and uncertainty. As Keyman points out, "Islamic discourse acted successfully as an articulating principle of resistance to such uncertainty by identifying ambivalence with global modernity and certainty with community, that is, with a turn to religion"¹⁰⁸

Apart from the process of globalization, certain internal factors also prompted the opening of a new era in the Turkish political life especially with regard to the relationship between the state, religion and pluralism. In the 1980s the most important development has been a softening of attitudes regarding secularism. The state elites began to make references to the significance of the Islamic identity of the Turks. As Heper observes, a related development has been the realization that an established religion might help enhance social control and limit the intensity of interest or class politics¹⁰⁹. Hence, Atatürkian principles were still emphasized but for the sake of arresting the spread of Marxism, fascism, and religious fundamentalism. In its preamble, the 1982 constitution made reference to 'Turkish historical and moral values'. Such references were in sharp contrast with the original Atatürkian approach, according to which the consciousness of the new Turk was to be rooted in science¹¹⁰. The military regime between 1980-1983 relied

¹⁰⁸ Keyman, "Global Modernity and Nationalism", 113.

¹⁰⁹ Heper, "Islam, Polity and Society", 351.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 350.

on Atatürkian thought for the purpose of reconstructing Turkish historical and moral values. In a book by the office of the Chief of General Staff, published in 1983, there were quotations from Atatürk not only on the state and on the principles of Atatürkism but also on such topics as personal relations, family life, youth, toleration, division of labor, and work solidarity¹¹¹. Birttek and Toprak argue that the 1980 coup resulted in the transformation of state identity from radical secularist to "neo-republicanism" whose appeal to national uniformity was no longer dictated by the basic principles of Kemalist nationalism¹¹². Instead, as Keyman notes

(B)y incorporating Islamic discourse and implicitly taking *umma* (a community of believers who are united by the same (Islamic) faith) as its model of social organization, and also by abandoning the radical secularism of the early Republic to secure its popular support and to open up the domestic market to Islamic capital, the post-1980 military regime weakened the very conditions of existence of Kemalist nationalism and the republican state¹¹³.

Of course that was not what the 1980 intervenors had in mind; they wanted to use Islam to bolster national unity. The use of Islamic discourse and its notion of *umma* was considered by the regime to be a temporary and pragmatic strategy to restore the power of the Kemalist republican elite. It is often pointed out that this shift in the discourse of the state elites, especially of the military, was most probably prompted by the objective of arresting the spread of communism, and

¹¹¹ Heper, *The State Tradition*, 147.

¹¹² F. Birttek, and B. Toprak, "The Conflictual Agendas of Neo-Liberal Reconstruction and the Rise of Islamic Politics In Turkey: The Hazards of Rewriting Turkish Modernity", *Praxis International*, 13, pp.192-211.

¹¹³ Keyman, "Global Modernity and Nationalism", 113.

other extreme movements. However, it paved the way for the recognition of the reality of a Muslim way of life which in turn led to unintended consequences.

The first was the coming to power of the neo-liberal Motherland Party in the 1983 national election which was the beginning of civilian rule. This gave rise to the construction of a new state ideology whose performative acts are no longer bound with radical secularism and the populist conception of the people but are "embedded in laissez-faire market ideology, the managerial and technocratic understanding of the state and the dissemination of the discourse of the economic rationality within Turkish society"¹¹⁴. Islam now started to take its place as a source, alongside science, for public policies. The 'technical elites' within the governing Motherland Party tried to develop "a synthesis between Islamic values and pragmatic rationality, through reconciling the former cultural orientations with the requisites of economic growth and Western democracy"¹¹⁵.

Secondly, the regime's temporary and pragmatic appeal to Islamic discourse has become one of the enabling factors for the Islam to provide a theme for political participation. This meant the emergence of Islamic organizations within both state and civil society as both political party and as *tarikats* (the religious brotherhoods) and also their increasing strength within the Turkish political landscape.

So, notwithstanding its Kemalist orientation, the 1980 military intervention opened a "discursive space for the revitalization of the language of difference, a

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 112.

¹¹⁵ Heper, "Islam, Polity and Society", 52.

discursive space which created a possibility for the marginalized and silenced identity to surface and express its resistance to the national secular identity"¹¹⁶. In the course of these developments there also emerged some groups who have put forward their criticisms regarding the shifts in the discourse of the state elites and expressed their wish for the reconstruction of the official Turkish identity in the early republican sense. Consequently, the debates and clashes between the Kemalist-secular groups and others who are more tolerant towards religious images have begun to constitute the polarized political cleavages in Turkey in the 1990s.

It can be argued, therefore, that the rise of Islamic identity in Turkey is not without basis. This study sees it as the combined effect of certain external and internal factors as examined above. The rise of political Islam and the revitalization of the language of difference through the surfacing of the marginalized Islamic identity have made the question of citizenship quite critical. The notion of citizenship lies at the center of the problematic relationship between the modern category of nation-state and the requirements of a plural society. The present historical conjuncture which has been shaped by the process of globalization and the concomitant tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization, makes the formulation of a working organizing principle for that problematic relationship a necessity. As liberal democracy becomes the dominant form of government all over the world, nation-states face its weaknesses with regard to the plurality of specific identity needs.

¹¹⁶ Keyman, "Global Modernity and Nationalism", 113.

In Turkey, during the last decades political Islam has taken important steps in filling the vacuum in civil society by building schools, mosques, foundations, by establishing solidarity organizations, new living areas, large-scale firms. It has created its own market within the communication sector; and it has gained significant political representation -both quantitatively and institutionally. Now it is engaged in a struggle to build its hegemony in these areas. The turbaned women became the symbol of this turn of Islam from its long-standing exile in the private, to a power/hegemony struggle in the public/political realms¹¹⁷. They have become the symbol of the Islamization of the Turkish life-world. Islamist politics clearly define the role of the individual in the community and the central issue has become the control of women's sexuality and social separation of sexes.

It is important to refer at this point to an irony. As the second chapter has tried to show, women were of utmost importance for the secular elites of the single party period. Changes in women's lives had a symbolic value since the penetration of secularism into the daily life is best illustrated by women's physical and social visibility. Hence, it was argued above that the case of women within the process of Turkish modernization is the most illustrative example for the notion of militant citizen who is both the object and the subject of the Kemalist will to civilization and who privileges her identity as citizen over her individuality. Ironically, women have played a central role in the rise of political Islam as well. The emergence of turbaned women in the 1980s and 1990s has indicated the re-Islamization of public spaces as well as personal relations and daily practices. These women make

¹¹⁷ Sevdâ Alankuş-Kural, "Alternatif Kamular ve İslamcı Kadınlar", *Toplum ve Bilim*, No. 72, 1997, 7.

'visible' the presence of Islam in the public realm which had been under the hegemony of the secular-republican discourse. The fact that these women emerged in large metropolitan centers which are the most modernized parts of the country and, more interestingly, at the most prestigious universities in these cities which are the representatives of the modernizing mentality of the Republic, makes their protest even more significant. As Feride Acar observes, for many in Turkish society in the late 1980s, it was an essentially incomprehensible anomaly that educated young women born and raised in a secular society became followers of Islamist movements since they are seemingly "least likely cases".¹¹⁸

As Nilüfer Göle points out, contemporary Islamism is a cultural and political deconstruction of the category of 'Muslim'¹¹⁹. This new version of Islamism is against both traditional interpretations of Islam on the one hand, and modernism, on the other. It is a critique of and a discontinuity with the given categories of Muslim identity. Its aim is to rename and reconstruct Muslim identity by freeing it from traditional interpretations and by challenging modernism.

It is radical both in its critique of traditions, considered responsible for the passivity and 'enslavement' of the Muslim people, and in its desire to set up a radically different civilization based on the Islamization of all spheres of life from the conception of the self, to the organization of the life-world, and to the politics of government¹²⁰.

With regard to the turbaned women as representatives of this new version of Islamism Feride Acar makes the following observation:

¹¹⁸ Feride Acar, "Women and Islam in Turkey" in Şirin Tekeli ed., *Women in Modern Turkish Society* (London, New Jersey: Zed Books, 1995), 54.

¹¹⁹ Göle, "Secularism and Islamism", 51.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 54.

For the first time in the Turkish Republic's history, the conventional view which equated Islam with women's 'imprisonment' at home was being challenged by the appearance of these women demanding an 'Islamic way of life' through open political struggle in which they, very effectively, used the weapons and tactics of modern democracy.¹²¹

The radicalism of political Islam is also symbolized in the distinction between headscarf (*başörtü*) and turban (*türban*) that is often underlined by the women who wear the *türban*. As Kadioğlu points out, this distinction stems not only from the various styles of head-dress representing different currents but also from the different background, education, public participation, and militancy of the women who cover their hair¹²². A headscarf is a smaller piece of cloth covering only the head and not the neck. It is worn by the women who follow traditional customs and behavior and whose activities are confined in the private realm usually without an active role in the public realm. Women who wear the headscarf mostly reside in small towns and on the outskirts of large cities in squatter settlements that were formed as a result of internal migration. As Kadioğlu observes, women who wear the this head-dress include elderly women who were youngsters during the modernizing reforms of the 1920s and 1930s and who never internalized the new dress codes initiated by the Kemalists. To use Kadioğlu's terms their perceptions are "pre-Kemalist rather than anti-Kemalist."¹²³ They represent a continuation of traditional modes of behavior rather than a missionary, militant image as was the case during the 1950s and 1960s.

¹²¹ Acar, "Women and Islam in Turkey", 47.

¹²² Kadioğlu, "Women's Subordination", 655.

¹²³ Ibid., 648.

Women who wear the turban, on the other hand, represent a more activist group. The turban is an urban phenomenon and it symbolizes the political aspect of the Islamic movement in Turkey during the last decade. Most women who wear the türban are students of higher education. In the research that Nilüfer Göle has conducted, there are numerous references by the turbaned university students to the difference between their headdress and the traditional style of headcovering, that is between the headscarf and the turban¹²⁴.

The origins of the 'turban affair' as a political issue dates to the military regime of the 1980-1983 period. In the same year that it took power, the military regime came up with proper dress codes for the civil servants which prohibited the veil for the women civil servants. It was considered as the symbol of a certain ideology¹²⁵. The next year the Ministry of Education put into force a regulation that prohibited the veiling of the students and teachers of the secondary educational institutions. By the time the President of Republic, Kenan Evren, also referred to the issue of women's head covering in his numerous speeches and expressed his disapproval of the veiling of women in public places. He argued that there could be no interference with the way women dress themselves at home, yet that there were certain requirements with regard to education and workplace¹²⁶.

The dress codes for the civil servants and the students of secondary education were reinstated by the Higher Board of Education, which in December

¹²⁴ Göle, *Modern Mahrem*, 150.

¹²⁵ Aktaş, *Kılık Kıyafet ve İktidar*, 102.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 106.

1982, forbade female university students to cover their heads while attending the classes. This raised a great reaction from among the veiled students. Following this ban the issue of women's head covering became increasingly politicized. Since that time this issue has been at the center of a polarized debate in the Turkish public. The attitude of the state towards the turban has gone back and forth between a relatively increased level of flexibility and strict control. However, it is a fact that this issue has always remained as the most sensitive issue within the secular-Islamist polarity in Turkey.

The controversy over women's head-dress has involved politicians, bureaucrats, intellectuals, artists, businessmen, writers, students, and average citizens. The Turkish media alike, has covered these debates extensively and depicted them as the clash between the 'modern' women who wear short skirts and the 'traditional' who wear turban. The former group expressed publicly their disapproval of the latter by organizing expeditions to Atatürk's mausoleum in Ankara.

The politicization of the issue of women's head covering and the accompanying polarization acquired increased momentum with the coming to power of the Islamist Welfare Party (RP) in Turkey's December 24, 1995 general elections. In June 1996, the RP and the center-right secular True Path Party (TPP) formed a coalition government with the RP's leader, Necmettin Erbakan as the prime minister for the first two years of the coalition. The strong showing of the RP ensured that women's head-dress would remain one of the major points of political debate.

In January 1997 the RP re-opened the issue to discussion by claiming that they would soon lift the ban on turban both for university students and for the civil servants. On February 2 of the same year, Prime Minister Erbakan opened to signature the decree that allowed the wearing of turban for the university students.

By the time the media was writing that Tansu Çiller, the leader of the TPP, was sympathetic towards the lifting of the ban at least for the university students if not for the public personnel. This, again, increased the degree of polarization between secular and Islamist groups. Some ministers from the TTP said they would resign rather than signing that decree. Some, like Yıldırım Aktuna, said the *türban* might become the cause of the dissolution of the coalition government. Five women parliamentarians from different political parties organized a common press conference and declared that the turban is the symbol of a movement that challenges the basic values and principles of the republican state and that aims at establishing a state order on the basis of religious rules¹²⁷. In a similar vein, Mümtaz Soysal, who is a professor of law, a member of parliament and a columnist in daily *Hürriyet*, argued that although the demands for the lifting of the ban on turban might at first sight seem as demands within the human rights framework, they indeed are the first steps taken to dismantle the secular-republican order and to replace it with a *Şeriat* order. Soysal considered the lifting of the ban as the sign of the defeat of the republican order on the face of the threat of the *Şeriat*, and argued that the results of such a defeat will be horrifying¹²⁸. An

¹²⁷See *Hürriyet*, January 30, 1997.

¹²⁸See his article "Oturam Kızlar" (Sitting Girls), *Hürriyet*, January 31, 1997.

interesting statement came from Gencay Gürün, an independent member of parliament. She said that she viewed the debate over the türban as an effort to divide the country, as a sign of separatism.¹²⁹ On February 15, 1997 The Women's March Against the *Şeriat*, a protest movement organized by the Association of Contemporary Lawyers(Çağdaş Hukukçular Derneği) took place in which slogans were voiced against turban as well as Islamic groups. This exacerbated the polarized debate between secular and Islamist groups.

There are more moderate figures within the secular group. One such person is Taha Akyol, a columnist in *Milliyet* who has argued that there is need for mutual liberalization and democratization in the secular-Islamist polarity in Turkey. According to him, both groups should get rid of their radicalism. The seculars should give up their wish for the disappearance of religion from all spheres of life except the realm of individual conscience, and should accept the demand for religious freedom in the public sphere. The Islamists, on the other hand, should give up the idea of a state order based on religious law.¹³⁰ Another figure in this trend is Gülay Göktürk, a columnist in *Yeni Yüzyıl*. She has strongly criticized the view that turban should be prohibited from the public realm because it is the symbol of a particular ideology which is the main argument put forward by radical secularists in Turkey who claim that they are not against the veiling of women in the private. Göktürk asserted that this should be the reason for allowing the turban, because if turban is a symbol of a certain ideological and political identity, the ban

¹²⁹ *Milliyet*, February 11, 1997.

¹³⁰ See his "İslam ve Laiklik" (Islam and Secularism), *Milliyet*, February 16, 1997.

over it is an attack on a basic freedom which is more serious than being prevented from dressing as one wishes.¹³¹

The Islamists and the veiled women themselves contextualize the issue with reference to fundamental human rights and freedoms view the ban as a violation of human rights. Setting aside the radicals among them, in general they rejected the attack that they symbolize a desire to dismantle the republican order and to replace it with a *Şeriat* order. They argued that wearing turban was a requirement of their religious faith which in turn was an inseparable aspect of their identity and that in a secular state everybody should have had the right to religious freedom.

¹³¹See her "Refah Gider Türban Kalır", *Yeni Yüzyıl*, February 6, 1997.

CONCLUSION

What can be extrapolated from the debate on turban is that the turban affair is a specific case where we can observe the weaknesses of the modern notion of citizenship together with its main pillars as the public/private distinction, the notion of political equality in the form of equality before the law, and negative freedom which leaves the citizens free in the private domain. This weakness of the modern notion of citizenship has become more visible with the contemporary process of globalization since the latter has paradoxically led to the shattering of the homogenous cultures of the nation-states system and to the emergence of local identities. Different ethnic and cultural groups within the nation-states have left the latter face to face with what Anne Phillips has called 'the problems associated with equality in the context of difference'. Turkey is not an exception to this global trend. A specific case where one observes the centrality of these problems is turban affair in Turkey.

The protest of the turbaned women was a serious challenge. These women wanted to have university education and to become civil servants with their heads covered with turban. They in theory have the right to do all these things, because they are citizenship rights and, in that respect equal with everybody else in the public realm. But they could not exercise their right in question because their head-dress symbolizes an aspect of their identity that should have been located in the private. This illustrates the weakness of the conception of equality of the

liberal democratic tradition that views equality as sameness and adapts an abstract universalist definition of the public, opposed to a domain of the private seen as the realm of particularity and difference. The result has been a putatively homogeneous public. It is within this public sphere that citizenship is defined in liberal tradition. The rise of Islamic identity in general, and the turban affair in particular in Turkey showed that the abstract notion of citizenship fell short of being able to respond to the demands of particular identities, it obscured the representation of these identities, and thereby led to a crisis of participation in liberal democratic regimes. The turbaned women in Turkey wanted to be present in public spaces with their turbans; they demanded to be *recognized publicly* with their turban.

This challenge of the turbaned women was usually viewed by the secular circles as a problem that could have frustrated the consolidation of democracy in Turkey. However, the challenge in question might also be viewed as a possibility of a "democratic disclosure"¹³² and this essay is optimistic about such a possibility. This disclosure, however, requires a change in the way we conceive democracy which in turn can be realized through certain strategies and commitment to certain normative principles. The major strategy is the revitalization of the public sphere in the form of a new mode of articulation between the public and the private. This task of reviving the public sphere in turn requires a broader definition of the realm of politics. In that way, the public sphere and therefore the realm of politics will be opened up to differences, to a maximum pluralism. In other words, it will not be

¹³² Keyman, "Kemalism, Modernite, Gelenek", 98.

excluding the particularities of the different conceptions of good life which are to a very great extent shaped by such aspects of one's identity as gender, race, religious beliefs, ethnic affiliations, which have traditionally been conceptualized as private concerns.

In a reformulation of the relationship between the public and private spheres, this broadened conception of the public realm asserts, at the same time, that the individual will not be sacrificed to the citizen. In other words, "the plurality of forms of identities through which we are constituted and which correspond to our insertion in a variety of social relations, as well as their tension, should be legitimized"¹³³.

This mode of articulation between the public and the private, in its turn requires a commitment to certain normative principles. One such principle is the development of the notion of 'relational identity'. The recognition of the multi-dimensionality of the identity and its relation to 'the other' contributes to the reconstruction of the public sphere around a dialogue among different identities¹³⁴. Then, democracy which can meet the demands of a plural society is the one which regulates the relations among different identity positions. This perspective implies that democracy should be thought of as a continuous process rather than as an end point or as a definition of a certain system¹³⁵. There is no end point to the process of democratization. Such conception of democracy as a continuous process is

¹³³ Mouffe "Preface: Democratic Politics Today", 5.

¹³⁴ Keyman, "Nasil Bir Liberal Demokrasi", 102.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 105.

possible only if the dialogical or relational character of identity is recognized. In addition to this, such a conception of democracy requires a non-essentialist framework which suggest that all identities are forms of identifications and are necessarily precarious and unstable¹³⁶. This precariousness of identities makes democracy an endless process. As was mentioned above, an identity can develop through its relation to the 'other'. The recognition of the relational character of identity brings with it another normative principle: a political culture based upon the principle of responsibility toward the other ¹³⁷.

A second normative principle is a new conception of political community; more specifically, a shift away from stressing commonality or the existence of a substantive common good at the expense of plurality and respect for differences. It is not possible to envisage a politics from which antagonism, division, and conflict would have disappeared. This is the principle of "agonism"¹³⁸ which requires the acknowledgment or recognition of the relationship between identity and difference. The idea of the common good should be viewed as specifying, in Wittgenstein's term, a "grammar of conduct" that coincides with the loyalty to the constitutive ethico-political principles of modern democracy: liberty and equality for all¹³⁹. This perspective, envisages citizenship as a form of political identity that is created through allegiance to a set of rules and practices, more specifically to the political principles of modern democracy -i.e. liberty and equality for all. In this

¹³⁶ Mouffe "Preface: Democratic Politics Today", 10.

¹³⁷ Keyman, "Nasil Bir Liberal Demokrasi", 106.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 101.

¹³⁹ Chantal Mouffe, "Citizenship and Political Identity", *October*, Summer 1992, no. 61, 30.

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perspective, a citizen is not someone who is the passive receiver of rights and who enjoys the protection of the law. It is a common identity of persons who might be engaging in many different communities and who have different conceptions of good, but who accept submission to certain authoritative rules of conduct. "Those rules are not instruments for achieving a common purpose -since the idea of a substantive common good has been discarded- but conditions that individuals must observe in choosing and pursuing purposes of their own"¹⁴⁰. They only provide a framework of common practices to guide political activities of the citizens. So, they do not postulate the existence of a substantive common good, but nevertheless they imply the idea of commonality, an ethico-political bond that creates a linkage among the participants in the association.

At this point, Mouffe's account of Michael Oakeshott's reflections on civil association in *On Human Conduct* can be very illuminating¹⁴¹. In her account Mouffe focuses on Oakeshott's differentiation between two alternative interpretations of the modern state: *universitas* and *societas*.

Universitas indicates an engagement in an enterprise to pursue a common purpose or to promote a common interest. Contrary to that model of association of agents engaged in a common enterprise, defined by a purpose, *societas* designates a formal relationship in terms of rules, not a substantive relation in terms of common action. As Oakeshott states

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 31.

¹⁴¹ Chantal Mouffe, "Democratic Citizenship and the Political Community" in C. Mouffe ed. *Dimensions of Radical Democracy: Pluralism, Citizenship, Community*, (London, New York: Verso, 1992), 232-235.

The idea *societas* is that of agents who, by choice or circumstance, are related to one another so as to compose an identifiable association of a certain sort. The tie which joins them... is not that of an engagement in an enterprise to pursue a common substantive purpose or to promote a common interest, but that of loyalty to one another¹⁴².

It is not a mode of relation, therefore, in terms of common action but a relation in which participants are related to one another in the acknowledgment of the authority of certain conditions of acting. To belong to the political community -*societas*- what is required is that we accept a specific language of civil intercourse. Oakeshott calls this *res publica*. Those rules prescribe norms of conduct to be subscribed to in seeking self-chosen satisfactions and in performing self-chosen actions.

To recover citizenship as a strong form of political identification requires our loyalty to the *res publica*, to the political principles of modern democracy and the commitment to defend its key institutions. 'Equality and liberty for all' is the central political principle of modern liberal democracy. "The conditions to be subscribed to and taken into account in acting are to be understood as the exigency of treating the others as free and equal persons"¹⁴³. The loyalty to the central political principle of liberty and equality for all is a necessary condition to have a plural society by which we mean a revitalized public sphere through the participation of the maximum of the plurality of identities pertaining to culture, religion, morality, ethnicity, gender, and class.

¹⁴² Quoted in *ibid*, 232.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 236.

These strategies and normative principles make it possible to think of the possibilities of a democratic vision of state/society relations in Turkey. When viewed in the light of these points, that is on the condition that there is commitment to them, the content of the turban affair in Turkey changes dramatically and turns into a possibility of a democratic opening. The radical secular circles can help strengthen this possibility by leaving their desire to confine religion to the domain of individual conscience, and by accepting that turban is a matter of social actors' self-understanding and thereby recognizing the need for a new mode of articulation between the public and the private. Wearing a turban is a way of saying "I want to be what I am, and I am proud of it", it is an inseparable aspect of these women's identities. When looked at from the perspective of the social actors' self-understanding, it becomes hard to treat the case as a matter of individual conscience. The radicals among the Islamists, on the other side, can enhance this process of democratic opening by abandoning the idea of a state order on the basis of Islamic principles which would make the veil compulsory for all women in the country which would be in contradiction with the right to treat certain aspects of life -such as religion- as private.

It seems inevitable to ask at this point the question that what happens if the radical Islamists come to power and replace the existing order in Turkey with a religious order. The answer to this question is that to defend the widest possible pluralism does not mean to claim that all differences can or should be accepted. Some criteria must exist to decide what is admissible and not admissible. Perhaps the most adequate criterion can be found in the notion of 'agonism' which means

the coexistence of differences, different identities under the condition that none of the aims at the destruction or the elimination of any other.

Another criterion may be Amy Gutmann's distinction between toleration and respect: "not every aspect of cultural diversity is worthy of respect. Some differences -racism, anti-Semitism, and religious fundamentalism- are obvious examples- ought not be *respected*, even if expressions of these views must be *tolerated*"¹⁴⁴. Thus, at the level of expression they are admissible, but when it comes to taking the form of action they are not admissible. So, Gutman's distinction is also on the same line with the principle of agonism; what is not admissible according to Gutman's criterion is differences that are aiming at the destruction or even elimination of other differences. At this point the importance of defending the key institutions of liberal democracy such as constitutional government and rule of law becomes even more clear. Because, it is only through these institutions that the criteria for what is admissible and not, and the possibility of the coexistence of differences make sense.

Consequently, what the turban affair illustrates is that unless the relational character of identity (the fact that it is only through our relations with others that we construct our own identities) is recognized, and unless agonism is accepted as the organizing principle of the social and political life, it will not be possible to overcome the issues stemming from the existence of different identities within nation-states. For instance, there are, and will always be, differences among the individuals with regard to the ways they prefer to live their religion. The important thing is the coexistence of such differences without aiming at the destruction of the

others and their encouragement in ways that will lead to their development as actors in the public deliberation of political issues.

¹⁴⁴ Gutmann, "Introduction", 21.